JESUS AND THE MODERN OUTLOOK

FRANK H. SPRAGUE

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BY

FRANK H. SPRAGUE
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TO THOSE WHO ARE PREPARED TO LOOK BEYOND RELATIVE APPEARANCES IN THE RAPIDLY SHIFTING SCENES OF THE PRESENT ERA, FOR A MORE ENDURING BASIS ON WHICH TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF LIVING, THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

This is preeminently an age of marvels. Never before has the human mind broken through barriers of ignorance to such an extent and been greeted by broad vistas stretching away on every hand towards the infinite. Unprecedented developments in the arts and sciences are ushering in a new order of civilization. Interpretations of the cosmos are undergoing rapid and radical changes. Men are coming to think in new terms about familiar subjects. Does Jesus' philosophy of life seem out of date in this modern outlook, or does it still offer the true solution of the human problem?

The following pages are devoted to a frank consideration of this theme.

THE AUTHOR.

Jesus and the Modern Outlook.

CHAPTER I.

ENVIRONMENT.

Mortals wake to consciousness at the threshold of the school of experience in a world of mystery. One of the first lessons the young child has to learn is to distinguish between self and environment. He discovers, after a few trials, that it hurts to maul his chubby feet; so he comes to recognize his feet as parts of himself. After repeated attempts to grasp distant objects to which his fancy turns, he realizes that they are something apart from himself. As he develops mentally and his experience broadens, he discovers, through contact with the world in a thousand ways, that things are not what they appear to be, that sense-impressions are largely misleading.

All along the pathway from ignorance to knowledge, mortal man is obliged to unlearn almost as fast as he learns, to readjust his bearings constantly to harmonize with newly discovered facts. For no sooner does he get an idea into his head regarding any particular phenomenon, or class of phenomena, than he stumbles upon a point of view that presents the situation in a different light. The ancients learned to forecast eclipses, and account for celestial phenomena in general, on the basis of a theory of circles and epicycles in which they conceived the heavenly bodies to move; but the discovery of the Copernican point of view necessitated a radical recasting of astronomical theories on new lines. And now comes along the Einstein theory of relativity, which presents the cosmos in a still more revolutionary light.

Should it not be tolerably certain by this time that a solution of the mystery on the basis of material indications is impossible? Can the truth be established by pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of illusory phenomena? Are the faculties employed in delving into material evidences capable of recognizing the channel through which ultimate truth is revealed? These are questions that challenge speculative thought. It is not, however, with these larger, universal aspects of the phenomenal world that mankind is chiefly concerned, but with immediate and intimate contacts with every-day environment.

In the broadest sense, there are two classes of people; those who simply go ahead and live, making the most of the situation as they find it, without questioning; and those who are sufficiently concerned with what it is all about to inquire into life's mystery, meaning, and purpose, and search for a solution of the problem in some fashion. To most persons, the world is just a place in which to live and seek enjoyment; a workshop, a playground, an arena for exploiting desires, ambitions, tastes, talents, fads, and what not. It is a school in which to work out problems; or perchance, for some, a probationary sphere in which to prepare for a future heaven. How few, indeed, grasp the profounder truth that existence itself is the problem to be solved; and how very few of these reach the point of discovering the key to the solution!

Yet who, at some time in his career, has not paused to ask himself what it all means—the fact of consciousness, the world of nature, the nightly panorama of innumerable stellar orbs moving in rhythmic order through unfathomable space; and to cap the climax, *man*, seemingly a product of cosmic evolution, but withal, capable of standing off and contemplating the wonder and mystery of creation, its nature, purpose, destiny! The revelation is overpowering, staggering to the imagination. The observer remains spellbound, overawed by the vision. Its magnitude, majesty, marvelousness, transcend human comprehension. The personal sense of self is lost in an indescribable feeling of awe and adoration, in the consciousness that one is communing with an infinite presence whose glory shines through the visible spectacle, transfiguring each symbol with a supernatural radiance.

What does the experience teach? Who is able to interpret the vision? How can finite sense grasp the meaning of the profound truth concealed beneath the garment of phenomena—elusive, baffling, intangible? At this point most seekers are ready to abandon the pursuit of a reality that seems beyond the reach of human faculties. Why waste time in vain speculation? Away, to something more practical, and leave such vagaries to idle dreamers. Ah, yes, idle dreamers! The ideals which have inspired human progress and brought the race to its present status were conceived in heaven and borne to earth by such dreamers. It is, in the last analysis, the insight of the world's seers that leavens the lump of human experience, even to its most commonplace details.

It is a trite saying that knowledge is power. Ignorant, superstitious thought is in bondage to environment. It fears real and imaginary foes. Its sense of dominion is confined within narrow frontiers. Although the urge for obtaining means of subsistence stimulated barbaric races to cultivate intelligence along certain utilitarian lines, they found little incentive for extending the pursuit of knowledge further; consequently they remained in a state of arrested mental development. Keen as were their instincts within a restricted area, they failed to fulfill the mandate of growth in all-around ways by advancing to a higher plane of thinking. The animal's consciousness is merged in its environment, as a fish is immersed in the water. It does not recognize the mental factor as the thing that separates the *me* from the *not me*. Man differs from the animals in possessing the power of self-analysis, the capacity to turn the search-light on his own mental operations and thereby discover that he exists apart from his environment.

As the world awoke out of the deep sleep of medievalism, the hunger for knowledge began to exhibit itself in that mighty impulse to which our present civilization is so largely indebted for its phenomenal achievements—the modern scientific spirit. That tidal-wave of intellectual expansion gave birth to a new method of truth-seeking, unique by reason of the thorough and comprehensive manner in which it went about its quest. Three important considerations are embraced in its program, namely, accurate observation of facts, systematic classification of the data thus obtained, and logical deduction of conclusions therefrom.

In the natural order of human accomplishment, thought precedes action, theory anticipates practice, the abstract comes before the concrete, the ideal prepares the way for the actual. An intelligent comprehension of the factors involved in a transaction makes efficient procedure possible and promotes substantial results. The researches of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and other pioneer astronomers of the modern school, blazed the way for the later development of world commerce and internationalism. Gutenberg, Watt, Morse, and other original minds opened up new realms for inventive genius to exploit and paved the way for the unprecedented achievements of modern industry and the arts of civilization. And in a similar way, enlarged opportunities have accrued from the investigations of men of originality and foresight in other fields.

It has been said that there is nothing new under the sun; yet right here is a new development without precedent in history. Progress does not continue in a straight line; unanticipated factors enter at intervals and add their impetus to the direction of affairs. One discovery opens the way for another, and so on, often in geometrical ratio.

Growth in nature proceeds by stages; it follows certain regular lines until the expanding organism doffs its outworn garb and appears in a fresh guise. After passing through a succession of molts in the larval stage, the caterpillar assumes a distinctly new form in the chrysalis state. Then, when the developing imago within has reached maturity, the chrysalis shell bursts and a winged butterfly emerges.

So in the mental realm, thought expands within the limits of a particular theory until, having outgrown the intellectual mold in which it was originally cast, the developed idea bursts the shell of the old concept and enters upon a new dispensation.

Ancient peoples attained marvelous proficiency in certain branches of artisanship and artistry, excelling in some respects the handicraft of modern times; but the area of their operations and the range of their exploits were comparatively restricted. The modern revolution in astronomical theories, the introduction of printing, the invention of the steam-engine, the telegraph, the telephone, the electric light, and the phonograph, the development of photography and numerous processes in vogue in the arts and sciences, as well as the arrival of the age of machinery,—these and many other factors have radically changed the complexion of society by giving added momentum to progress and placing civilization on a broader basis. Thus epoch has succeeded epoch since the day-star of the modern era arose.

And now, following the dawn of the twentieth century, human conceptions have entered upon another cycle of expansion. At about that period, a series of discoveries of generic significance began to flash upon a world already accustomed to startling innovations. Fresh reservoirs of potential energy were tapped and hitherto unknown modes were utilized in the interest of human enlightenment and progress. As a result of these developments, the uttermost parts of the earth have been brought, as by magic, within the circle of all-embracing intelligence; and dwellers in remote and waste places are enabled to enjoy, in some respects, a world-wide environment.

Mankind had to become reconciled to sensational changes and novel points of view. At first the championship of strange doctrines and advanced ideals excited credulity and provoked hostile demonstrations to such an extent that their sponsors were imprisoned or tortured as heretics. Now, however, men are educated to expect revolutionary disclosures, and radical innovations are treated as a matter of course.

Can there be any question that the world to-day has no more than approached the vestibule of an age of major developments destined to unfold in a steady crescendo? Activity is the rule of life. Progress, not repose, is the goal perpetually ahead. The saintly soul, looking forward to a haven of rest in a post mortem paradise, needs to be aroused from a state of dream-like lethargy and brought to face reality. The reposeful atmosphere of a finished career, in the spiritual as in the natural realm, denotes stagnation, death. The collapse of ancient superstitions, the disruption of traditional concepts, the onrush of newly apprehended forces, the opening up of resources, capacities, and opportunities hitherto held in reserve in the universal storehouse, — these manifestations, like bursting springtime buds, are omens of the birth of a new order, a radical departure in human experience, the awakening of consciousness to a more mature conception of living.

After the pressing wants of physical existence are cared for, men seek to enlarge and enrich their environment in ideal and spiritual directions by cultivating the fine arts. In that field, creative genius finds unlimited scope for its exercise. Most of the arts are dependent on forms already existent in nature for the expression of their ideals. The creative instinct in man has, however, given birth to two original art-forms which represent a distinct departure from anything found in nature, namely, *architecture* and *music*. Although hints of certain geometric figures used in architectural design may be traced in natural formations, humanly planned edifices embody a new idea, a distinctive contribution to man's environment. But even architecture is obliged to make use of building-material provided in the natural world.

Modern music, however, constitutes a wholly original art-form, a distinct advance over anything previously known in the way of ideal expression. Although the songs of birds voice emotional feeling of a certain kind in musical cadences, their spontaneous appeal bears little analogy to musical harmony as a vehicle for the expression of intellectual and spiritual ideas. Not until the awakening sense of the modern world began to reach out for new means to satisfy its higher longings and aspirations, and inventive genius made possible the construction of suitable instruments for the technical rendering of tonal harmonies, was the birth of an art-form capable of embodying the profoundest and most universal phases of experience possible.

The greatest musical compositions usher the appreciative listener into the presence of an environment of pure ideas. In following their highest and profoundest flights, one may establish contact with the real and spiritual, unhampered by external modes and mediums with which other art-forms are obliged to deal. Here, beyond the pale of grosser material elements, the uplifted, illumined sense communes with the infinite and catches glimpses of eternity.

The power of the spiritual idea is irresistible. When once the truth begins to seep into crevices in the artificial dam of accumulated false beliefs which obstructs the free course of spiritual progress, it gradually opens up channels through which pent up forces make their way, until the whole mass is honeycombed and undermined. Even the dullest sensibilities are daily becoming aware that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of" in the waning ultra-materialistic philosophy of a recent past; but how many persons have as yet glimpsed the momentous issue towards which the whole movement is tending?

Increasing marvels in the outer order are only shadows of transforming agencies at work behind the show of phenomena. Materialistic interpretations and developments must have their day and fulfill their course. They are voices "crying in the wilderness" of human speculation, preparing the way for the reception of a spiritual understanding of the problem of living.

Mortals are becoming more and more dissatisfied with the discordant physical, economic, and social conditions amidst which they fancy themselves to have been placed either by divine providence or otherwise; and rightly so. Not only are they constantly seeking to better their natural surroundings, but they are reaching out into the unseen for new means of satisfying immortal cravings. Extension and control of environment is the problem which above all things appeals to mankind in general. To release forces resident in nature and harness them for service, to improve living conditions by creating more congenial and elevating surroundings, to provide increased cultural advantages,—these are the objects for which men strive and struggle.

The ideal of freedom is innate in all creatures, yet the attempt to realize that condition seems to be blocked at every turn by resistance or prohibition. How is this paradoxical situation to be accounted for? The urge for freedom is the dominant impulse throughout the physical realm. Phenomena of growth and development on every plane bear witness to this tendency, operating automatically to produce individualized and diversified types and variations. The instinct of self-expression begins to crop out even in the most rudimentary processes in the subconscious strata of nature. Higher up in the scale, it becomes the ruling motive of conscious endeavor, in the incessant struggle of the individual to break away from subserviency to environment and be a law unto himself.

Ignorant of the fact that man, in his esssential nature, is spiritually constituted, and thus absolved from the rule of mechanical processes and brute force, mortals seek a kind of pseudo-freedom in material channels, until enlightened spiritual understanding opens the way to true freedom. Jesus' outlook on life was so utterly different from the usual one that even his closest disciples failed to grasp the full import of his mission while he dwelt amongst them. As his earthly mission drew to a close, he summed up the result of his life-endeavor in the reassuring message, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." What did he mean by *overcoming the world?*

There are, in the final analysis, two possible positions from which to approach the question. Either God made man subject to material law; or else man's environment does not really exist after the fashion in which it appears from a material standpoint. The popular notion of the universe as something that God *made*, somehow and at some time, fades out before the spiritual understanding that God and His universe—which comprise all that really exists—represent two aspects of uncreated being, related as *cause* and *effect*, logically coexistent and inseparable. Like the concave inside of a circle and its convex outside, neither could exist without the other. In this unity or unison of spiritual being, God is noumenon, substance, essence; the universe is phenomenon, expression, spiritual idea. If Deity could choose, plan, create, regulate (as these terms are commonly understood), the spiritual standard of being would be lost, and the infinite One, "with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning," would be a myth.

God *is;* and His spiritual idea, the cosmos as it is really constituted, *is*. Finite sense is ever ready to drag Deity down to its own level for convenience's sake and bow down to a mental idol that partakes of its own instincts and beliefs. Mortals can approach God only by acknowledging His standard; He cannot condescend to their standard. Material sense rejects the spiritual rule and order of being, and atones for its error by suffering. The human misconception of God as creator and director (in the usually accepted sense of the words) is responsible for no end of paradoxical and inconsistent suppositions.

Spiritually understood, that which appears to be creation, growth, evolution, represents the gradual revelation or unfolding of the ever-existent truth of being, as it appears from a human standpoint; as, by analogy, the landscape comes into view at early dawn, first in indistinct impressions, then, as sunrise approaches, in clearer outlines, until at length the panorama stands forth in all its beauty and variety of detail.

The notion that man and his environment are material, rests solely on the testimony of the physical senses; and these, as we have already observed, persistently falsify the truth. That sight, touch, hearing, and the rest, convey misleading impressions of the essential nature of things is beyond argument. Furthermore, experience broadly hints that, sifted to the bottom, the hypothetical laws of matter, which challenge the free exercise of man's capacities, represent finite misconceptions of the true or spiritual law and order of being; that they denote grooves deeply worn in the racial or universal consciousness,—grooves in which thought has so crystallized that the individual finds it almost impossible to break away from their binding obligations.

Natural law, so-termed, is regarded as immutable, supreme in its domain. Yet, what more can be predicated of it than this, that definite sequences of phenomena regularly occur under given conditions? This means that the factors we recognize in ordinary transactions in the physical realm observe certain uniform modes of behavior. But what if factors as yet undiscovered were brought into the equation? The emancipating process has been going on automatically all along in such simple, homely ways that mankind has failed to take note of the ultimate issue involved. What could be more natural than the development of extraordinary characteristics in wild flowers through clever processes of cultivation, or the transformation of a useless vegetable into a palatable article of food by the application of intelligent agricultural methods? These are only elementary examples of the encouragement of a process whose logical outcome reaches over into the realm of purely spiritual values.

The claim that gravitation is a specific principle universally and unconditionally operative has already been challenged by a process of insulation which neutralized its effect in test cases. The question is, whether a mode, or form of behavior, that can be interdicted or suspended can, strictly speaking, be regarded as connoting a *law*. Can law be outlawed? Is that which is called material law, at bottom more than a definite tendency operating consistently under given conditions? The mirage moves ahead as the observer advances. When he has gone far enough, must it not disappear altogether?

Shall human ignorance, or inability to demonstrate in any considerable degree, at the present stage, independence of these constant modes of energy or what not, in the form of matter, be accepted as sufficient evidence that the situation is destined to remain forever in statu quo? Or shall judgment which depends solely on the testimony of material sense (a constantly falsifying and self-contradictory witness) be suspended to await further developments in practical experience? Do not the scrapping of certain time-honored beliefs, and the rapid release within the recent past of hitherto unsuspected forces, presage the wholesale disclosure of more important secrets "hidden from the foundation of the world"?

The qualities and conditions we seem to observe in our environment must exist in thought in order to be manifest outwardly, objectively. If we did not *think* color, form, beauty, ugliness, resistance, distance, and what not, we could not recognize those things in our environment. That which appears to be evolution of material forms marks the development of ideals and images of thought. The human creature, the animal, and the insect dwell together; but each lives in a different kind of world because each has developed a different type of mentality. Furthermore, each individual looks out upon, and comes in contact with, a somewhat different environment, because of his particular mental status. Before they developed a color-sense, the denizens of earth lived in a colorless world. Just how things seemed to them we can only imagine; but we know that their outlook was quite different from ours. Yet, human conceit sometimes takes it for granted that sense-impressions denote absolute values.

According to the image photographed in mortal consciousness, it took untold ages for the sense of materiality to develop its present status. When the truth of the situation is once uncovered, however, the process of bringing about environing conditions more nearly in accord with the idea of infinite Mind is enormously expedited. As a steamship goes ahead for awhile under its acquired momentum after the engine has been reversed, so material beliefs and tendencies continue to exercise sway over the individual, in many ways, after he has adjusted his conscious thought to the spiritual fact. If, however, he adheres to the truth persistently and steadfastly enough, can there be but one ultimate outcome?

It may be well, in this connection, to note what has already been achieved in the right direction for the race. Along the pathway from ignorance to knowledge, and from knowledge to understanding, the emancipating process has passed through a succession of stages. Operations in the inorganic realm conform to what appear to be immutable laws or modes of gravitation, chemical affinity, and the like, acting mechanically and automatically. Then, at a certain point, another factor enters. In the vegetable kingdom the mandate of growth enables plants and trees to overrule mechanical modes and unfold their organisms spontaneously in the air and sunshine. Further along in the process, the emergence of animal forms again demonstrates the relative character of natural law; for the capacity for conscious choice and voluntary action permits living creatures to move about and roam at will over the face of the planet.

Next in order appears the human species, commonly known as *man,* or *mankind.* Here the power of rational self-determination takes the helm. Self-consciousness enables man to exercise enormously increased dominion over environing conditions, by enlarging the horizon of opportunity and carrying experience over the border line of the physical realm into the metaphysical. The mental factor becomes more prominent and predominant with each advance, and the ideal of freedom gains correspondingly.

All these revoutionary steps seem natural enough to us now, because they came about gradually through incredibly long geologic epochs. But what of the future and the changes it has in store? Is it thinkable that the process of emancipation, operating blindly in its incipient stages and guided by increasing intelligence later, is at length to become abortive? Has mankind been led thus far on the road to the goal only to be mocked by an elusive, vanishing specter in the name of freedom? If, however, the process is to continue, in what direction shall we look for the next turn?

The process might continue indefinitely along material lines, carrying the race to undreamed of heights of supremacy over natural conditions through the application of new discoveries in mechanical, chemical, electrical, biological, and other fields,—and all without touching the crux of the matter. Because man, in his essential nature, is spiritual, the human problem can never be solved on the basis of materiality. Sooner or later the spiritual factor must gain the ascendency and come to an open break with material methods.

Events steal upon us before we are aware of their coming. The outer shell of the material concept already exhibits symptoms of cracking in spots. A change of base is even now impending. Spiritual methods are assuming the lead over material. Man is beginning to come into his own, to be self-revealed. As the biological factor gained the ascendency over the mechanical, and human initiative in turn modified the biological routine, so spiritual enlightenment and understanding are establishing precedence over human reason and will-power and advancing the problem of dominion over environment a step further towards its ultimate practical solution.

While the individual cannot at present acquire full mastery over such deep-seated strongholds of material law as gravitation and various organized modes of energy, he can, if he chooses to go about it in the right way, succeed with simpler propositions. By firmly grasping the ideal of his true, spiritual manhood, instead of consenting to arguments of discord and disease which have become the stock in trade of fearsome, credulous mortals, he may implant in his consciousness the germ of better bodily conditions, and measurably enhance his moral and social environment. In such elementary ways, he can at once proceed to accumulate tangible evidence of the emancipating power of spiritual truth—a token and prophecy of greater achievements to follow in due order.

It may seem a far cry to complete victory over material conditions; but one cannot progress towards an ideal which he does not recognize or which he deems impossible of realization. So long have mortals been content to wait listlessly in the belief that they were to be transformed at death, as by magic, into full-fledged spiritual beings, that the task of working their way gradually out of bondage seems forbidding, if not preposterous. To discover the direction in which true freedom lies, is to open the door on opportunity. To know that the key which will finally unlock the storehouse of infinite possibilities is always ready at hand in one's own mentality, gives wings to hope and lends new incentive to endeavor.

The individual seems to be handicapped in the attempt to realize his potential freedom by the universal belief that a material body is somehow linked with man's spiritual nature. In human economy, the body acts as a connecting link between the individual and the outer circle of his environment, the natural realm. The first step towards the conquest of matter, then, involves putting off the fleshly sense, of which the body is the grosser objective symbol or expression; purification of thought and spiritualization of consciousness. To identify one's self habitually with a material body, to cater to "the flesh," which "profiteth nothing," to dwell on the structure and functioning of a physical organism, tend to perpetuate a state of servitude and close the door on progress towards that freedom which men crave above all else, but usually without understanding its nature or the way to achieve it. How can the individual attain to the full stature of spiritual manhood, unencumbered by a fleshly clod, until his thought of himself becomes so spiritualized that the material element fades completely out of the picture?

The understanding that, strictly speaking, the only real and abiding elements in one's make-up and environment are spiritual, tends, in some measure, to emancipate one's thought and enable one to exercise greater supremacy, in minor details at least, over material conditions. If the animal knew enough, it could break away from limiting conditions that curtail its liberties and restrict its efforts to a narrow routine. If the savage man centuries ago had known enough, he might have enjoyed the advantages of an all-around civilization. If men to-day knew enough, they might overcome physical handicaps and utilize their potential spiritual freedom to greater practical advantage.

The aeronautic excursions of the ancients were confined to the perusal of such legendary tales as that of Icarus attemping to fly with wings secured by wax; and this, simply because they had not learned to adapt means at hand for the construction of aircraft. The cords that bind mortals are within rather than without; and it is there that they must be cut.

Mankind has only recently achieved the previously impossible by perfecting aircraft capable of rising from the ground under their own power. As the plane taxies along the ground before taking off in the air and riding on wings, so spiritual developments are leading on towards the point where man is destined to cut loose from material dependencies and prove the sustaining power of unseen spiritual forces. How many periods will be required for the consummation of this step, no one may say; but each material obstacle overcome makes further progress easier.

As the imago matures within the pupa-shell until the time is ripe for the fully developed insect to make its escape, so the spiritual sense of selfhood develops gradually beneath a human exterior. The ratio of growth cannot always be gauged by outward indications. Spiritual sense may be gaining inwardly, even when progress seems to be at a standstill outwardly.

Mortals dote on the spectacular. They are thrilled at the very thought of such weird, hair-raising performances as walking on the water or passing through closed doors. The desire to accomplish phenomenal feats, however, marks a tendency matterward and still further involves thought in an earthly atmosphere. The very belief in the reality of material water would disqualify one for walking on it. By the time one had progressed far enough to be able to achieve such a result, one would find out that there was no material water on which to walk and no material body to walk on it.

If matter is "a thing of thought," as Professor Ostwald has tersely expressed it, it must be put under foot not by dealing with it as external substance, thereby making a reality of it, but by reconstructing thought on spiritual lines. What this means in a practical way, we shall try to indicate in a later chapter.

A solid, indivisible atom was once supposed to be the basic unit of all material structure. Now, however, laboratory experiments have been carried to the point where constituent parts of the atom, in the form of electrons, can be detached from the larger body. Furthermore, material phenomena in general are diagnosed as an effect produced in consciousness by organized activities of "energy" (whatever that may be), an imponderable, non-extensive, hypothetical something possessing not one of the phenomenal attributes which go to make up what the senses conceive to be *matter*. We are thus confronted with the paradox of a phenomenon shorn of its phenomenal qualities. What, then, can the basis of matter be, if not of the mental order?

Here we seem to be close to an imaginary line where matter per se disappears and the mental and physical factors meet and merge. The asserted laws of matter, from whatever angle viewed, now appear in a light quite different from that of the past. Is it not purely gratuitous to assume that the seeming show-world of material illusions, with its unhallowed medley of fleeting joys and tragic mis-happenings, is anything more than a shadowy substitute for the real,—that it has, in fact, anything to do with the divine order of things known to and upheld by infinite Mind?

Is not the belief that God, infinite wisdom and power, ordains or sanctions a material order shocking to the imagination, characterized by age-long suffering, disease, discord, cruelty, degradation, as a means of educating a race born of flesh and blood up to the point of apprehending the truth of being,—is not such an hypothesis abominable, to say the least? Could infinite goodness create or be responsible for such a self-contradictory, self-stultifying state of things? Do these conditions, then, exist in truth and reality, or do they represent the delirium of an erratic sense, the nightmare of a dream from which men need to arouse themselves in order to come into vital relation with their real, spiritual environment, eternally existent but outside the focal range of flesh-bound senses?

The belief in miracles has long been made to serve as a missing link in a loosely drawn philosophy, and give seeming consistency to an otherwise untenable theological system;—in much the same way that the formula, "nature abhors a vacuum," was formerly used to satisfy the demand for an adequate explanation of certain phenomena in the natural realm. What, then, is a *miracle?* To the aborigines, steam-transit would have seemed a miracle. To the early colonists, aviation would have seemed a miracle. To the thought of to-day, satiated as it is with wonder-working, the thing that seems most miraculous is not sensational mechanical developments, but the silent, natural operation of spiritual forces enabling the victim of false sense to realize a greater degree of harmony in his environment. As a child, by working out examples in elementary arithmetic, comes to know that he will be able to master more difficult problems in proportion as his understanding of the principle of mathematics broadens and his experience develops, so the humblest demonstrator of the power of spiritual truth to overcome material impediments has proof that a more implicit and consistent realization of that power will enable him to gain the mastery over more serious obstacles.

The human mind settles into ruts. It is prone to believe that what does not appear from the plane on which it finds itself comfortably situated is impossible of achievement. A shock or catastrophe is frequently necessary to startle it out of its chronic attitude of complacent satisfaction with the teachings of an agnostic philosophy and a traditional religion.

The false god of antiquity, conceived after the model of a mighty human potentate visiting wrath and affliction upon his subjects, is fast disappearing from intelligent circles. And the equally false god whose image a modern idolatrous sense worships in the name of science,—a god whose ways are implicated in the inexorable processes of a merciless physical mechanism,—this caricature of divine justice, goodness, and love is due to pass in its turn.

The true God, who is Spirit, manifested in spiritual modes, free from the taint of materialistic implications, will yet be acknowledged, worshipped, and obeyed, as superstition, bigotry, and misconception give way before spiritual understanding, and the path to freedom through demonstration of the facts of being opens up ahead.

CHAPTER II.

RELATIVITY.

What is commonly known as *the world* is a continuous panorama of images registered on a space-time screen. It is generally assumed that this phenomenal spectacle is fathered by the one creative intelligence, God; that there is somehow a logical connecting-link between the first cause or Principle of being, and the order of things that seems to material sense to exist. In attempting, however, to arrive at the truth by reasoning inductively from material premises, we get off the track at the outset. Through what process of mental legerdemain can a logical connection be established between an unimpeachable cause and an inconsistent effect? Can the pedigree of the seeming world-order to which the bodily senses testify be traced to a perfect source? Evidently we must either lower our standard of perfection as applied to God, or we must correspondingly raise our idea of His true expression.

Is there not an analogy between the materialistic standpoint in question and the ancient belief that the earth rested on Atlas's shoulders? And Atlas, —well, of course he had to stand on something, so they brought an elephant and a tortoise into the scheme;—the more intervening accessories the better. The further such a dilemma is removed, the less insistent seems the demand of logic. The story is told of an undaunted defender of the theory who, when asked what supported the tortoise, answered, Rocks; and when further interrogated as to what was underneath the rocks, he replied, More rocks; why, there are rocks and rocks all the way down! In all seriousness, have material hypotheses any more plausible foundation in truth?

Any one who believes that what is termed *matter* is really solid; that things are actually colored, heavy, stationary, or internally static, as appears to be the case, has only to consult modern text-books on the subject to be disillusioned. If he extends his investigations into the field of metaphysics, he will find that the objects with which he deals in the physical realm do not occupy space, nor are they there on their own account, *independent of the observing consciousness;* that, in fact, they do not exist at all in the fashion in which they appear to the senses. He will discover that he is simply dealing with his own mental impressions of a hypothetical somewhat of which he knows nothing at first hand. In other words, his knowledge of a material world develops on the basis of *suggestions* received from some uncomprehended source.

The statement that matter is unreal does not, as some seem to imagine, imply that the universe consists of phantoms and abstractions. It simply means that sense-impressions do not give a correct basis for appraising real values. Even the faintest inkling of spiritual ideas freed from material implications, such as we enjoy in moments of highest exaltation, points to the existence of a glorified spiritual universe vastly more real and tangible than are the distorted, fragmentary symbols presented in the material picture. Indeed, materiality is like dust in the eyes, obscuring the image of the real. Material, limiting concepts of space, time, form, color, number, and so forth, blur the view and shut out the transcendental vision. If there were no spiritual reality, there could be no seeming material misrepresentation.

Now, all this might sound like an idle show of words, did it not touch the most vital issue in the life of every individual. While, in the every-day affairs of relative human experience, we are obliged to deal with material symbols, it should be with the understanding that those things are a fleeting show and not the real, enduring substance of the cosmos. Is it not an eminently practical question whether one is staking his all on an egregious deception, or whether he is recasting his ideas and revising his platform to accord with a real situation? By *real,* we mean that which has an enduring foundation in changeless Principle. What, then, is *Principle?* Let us see.

The fact of existence admits of no controversy or denial; we simply have to accept it. When, however, it comes to the question of what exists, views may differ. That the bodily senses do not report correctly in the matter is as undeniable as is the fact of existence itself; for they constantly contradict themselves. That existence must have an ultimate source, or first cause, is also axiomatic, for there can be no such thing as effect apart from cause. That intelligence and orderliness are attributes of that cause would seem to be self-evident on the same ground. Moreover, we cannot well conceive of a variable, changeable first cause.

This constant, orderly, intelligent cause we call *God,* or the *God-Principle.* Furthermore, we may have tangible assurance of this Principle in the fact that the elements of uncertainty and fluctuation in our experience diminish in proportion as we come into harmony with the absolute ideal; even as we know, by the same token, that a rotating sphere is turning around a stationary point.

The real, then, is that which, by reason of its existence in Principle, is not subject to the contingencies of evolutionary processes or material vicissitudes. This cannot be said of things whose claim to reality rests on the testimony of the bodily senses. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." We call the spiritual,—the Godlike,—*real,* and the material, *unreal.* Instead of recognizing good and bad aspects of materiality, the greatest of seers condemned materiality itself as the root of all evil; a fraud, a delusion of "the devil" (a personified symbol of falsity) ; an unreal factor interpolated in experience, a gratuitous imposition having only a phenomenal show of existence with nothing to back it up,—like worthless commercial paper. He referred to the real, the spiritual, the God-authenticated factors by such figures of speech as "wheat," "sheep," "the righteous" (right) ; and he designated the unreal, the material, the spurious factors as "tares," "goats," "the unrighteous."

The type of consciousness that is born of the unreal show of things and is identified with material processes invites the fate of the mutable and perishable. How truly is the type *mortal man* an exponent of unconscious insincerity! Being the offspring of self-deceived sense, living in ignorance of the true ideal of selfhood, duped by suggestions of good and evil, obsessed with a passion for wealth, power, and prestige; aimlessly clutching at shadows, symbols, baubles, and trinkets in the vain pursuit of happiness; roaming and rambling heedlessly through earthly existence; dipping into this or that attraction that promises to satisfy an artificial appetite; and ending by discovering the vanity of it all; —is this type of creature really *Man?*

The mania for possession and accumulation of material resources, the inordinate craving for amusement and sports, the craze for fashions and fads, the fascination of playing the game of living,—these propensities breed abnormal social conditions and involve the race in discordant and disastrous situations which, in their cumulative development, pave the way for economic and political strife and war.

What, indeed, is material existence but a puppet-show, a ghost-dance, a shadow-pantomime of made-up characters? The latest scientific developments have shattered time-honored beliefs as to the reality of the show-world, by revealing its illusory character. Indeed, they threaten to deprive the natural order of its traditional basis in a hypothetical all-embracing ether, whose manifold modes of activity were supposed to underlie the evolution of physical forms, from stellar systems to mortals!

Speaking of recent changes in scientific theories, Professor E. E. Free says:* "Atoms, electrons and protons all have vanished; leaving, for the moment, nothing more substantial than a ghostly echo in empty space. . . . Matter and electricity turn out to be merely different aspects of the same thing. . . . A lump of sugar is as electric as a flash of lightning. Their insides are merely arranged a little differently." And again: "It is possible to show, quite convincingly . . . that both time and space are probably figments of the human brain and not natural realities at all."

Professor Einstein's researches indicate that the electron is not a reality; it is nothing more than a name for a disembodied force. And so with all physical objects. They are unsubstantial shadows. As one scientific writer has expressed it, "the entire [material] universe is something between a shadow-shape and a dream."

In less technical but no less pertinent phraseology, James observes: "What is your life? For ye are a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Which is a way of saying, in the metaphorical language of the Orient, that the show-world is a phenomenon without substance. Its claim to reality rests on the seeming existence of that which does not exist, and the seeming capacity to recognize it. In other words, that which appears outwardly as a material universe turns out, in the final analysis, to be a fleeting misrepresentation of the real.

A prominent clergyman has this to say concerning the new physics: "The theories of relativity

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* The Century Magazine, July, 1929.

. . . are going to have a far-reaching effect on religious thinking. . . . It is inevitable that our interpretation of spiritual reality is to be profoundly affected. . . . It is possible that the Deity associated with this world, or frame of space, may disappear. But it will be only to give place to a Being far transcending anything mankind has hitherto known." There was a time when one who had the temerity to advance views which now prevail in the scientific world, and are upheld by laboratory tests, would have been laughed to scorn. Says Professor Free: "It is an incurable persuasion of the human mind that anything new must be interpreted in terms of what is already familiar."

Evidently, the "new physics" has thrown a bomb into the carefully arranged, well-stocked storehouse of traditional scientific theories which a few years ago were supposed to be firmly established, and has shattered the very foundation of the structure. In this latest debacle, we have another illustration of the futility of seeking reality by reasoning inductively on the basis of material evidence. "The best laid schemes o' mice an' men" are always liable to miscarry. Pharaoh's hosts got along pretty well in pursuing the Israelites until the wheels of their chariots began to come off. Natural science has, with its own weapons, rather effectually demolished the claim that matter is real. Says Professor Eddington: "The frank realization that physical science is concerned with a world of shadows is one of the most significant of recent advances." Human curiosity may even now speculate as to the next scheme that will be advanced to account for the universe of physical phenomena, after the electrical theory now in vogue shall have been discarded in its turn as inadequate.

The doctrine of the non-reality of material substance is by no means a new one. Many philosophical idealists of different periods have held that matter was a subjective impression. The novel thing about the present situation is that modern scientific opinion, which has all along been antagonistic to this view, is rapidly coming to support the contention. For sometime past the researches of noted leaders in the scientific world have tended to discredit the supposition that matter has more than a phenomenal existence. It would indeed seem impossible to carry physical experiments much further without getting over the line and encroaching on the domain of purely mental problems. So we find ourselves back again at the starting-point in our consideration of the subject, with the weight of scholarly opinion to sustain the main point.

After all, we may ask, has the case been stated any more clearly and comprehensively than it was put by a Galilean carpenter nearly two thousand years ago when he said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing"? Because the inductive method of investigation to which natural science is committed prevents it from arriving at a stable basis on which to interpret the phenomena of existence, one hypothetical structure after another which it has reared with infinite patience and unbounded confidence has collapsed; and at present, it is casting about anew, with little in the way of a definite clue, for a surer foundation on which to build. "Whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away."

This latest example of the inconclusiveness of the traditional method of trying to establish the truth of being should aid in opening men's eyes to the fact that the ground of all real knowledge must be sought in the metaphysical realm. All we know, in the strict sense, lies beyond the reach of so-called material sense, and more than that, beyond the province of the type of reason that deals in sensuous concepts. The things we know most certainly, those that affect us most vitally, cannot be proven rationally, with or without the aid of the senses; they can be perceived only directly and intuitively. "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Jesus stated the profoundest of philosophical truths in simple fashion when he said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." This signifies, in the familiar language of to-day, that a relative point of view testifies to its own—relativity (material illusion). But he did not stop there. Although popular thought is at present attracted by speculative aspects of the doctrine of relativity, trained and untutored minds alike are frequently slow to grasp the further statement, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." In other words, the type of understanding that is gained from the absolute (spiritual) point of view testifies to the absolute quality and unconditioned nature of real being. This revelation marks the point of departure for practical achievement on a new basis, of which experience with the relative aspect of things gives no inkling.

Jesus saw beyond "the mind of the flesh" to the Mind that is God and the cosmos as it exists spiritually in Him. He found his native atmosphere in the world of spiritual realities. He realized that the type of perception which is linked with cerebral activity, and its counterpart,—the seeming show-world evolved on the basis of electrical processes,—were a transient illusion. Therefore he could say in truth, "Before Abraham was, I am."

The basis of his teaching has been overlooked or misunderstood, in religious as well as secular circles, because the metaphysical distinction which he drew so sharply and broadly between "this world"—the realm of material conceptions—and the realm of spiritual reality has escaped attention. This clean-cut line of demarcation between the real and the unreal runs like a thread through his parables and other teachings, and features in all his doings.

He contrasted "the Father" (the source and substance of all that really is) and "Satan" (the mythological symbol of unreality), "the kingdom of heaven" or "kingdom of God" (the realm of reality expressed) and "the kingdoms of this world" (the unreal show-world), "life [zoe] eternal" and the delusion of so-called material "life [psuche]." He was ever about his Father's business; not necessarily what is commonly thought of as religious work, but the business of judging and acting from the standpoint of reality, whether in the temple and the market-place, or by the wayside. Whether following the carpenter's trade or teaching the multitudes, he recognized the source of true expression in the metaphysical realm. "Cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also."

By parable and metaphor he illustrated the fate of the unreal. The man who came to the marriage feast without a wedding-garment was bound hand and foot and cast "into the outer darkness"; the tares were burned at harvest-time; the goats were consigned to the left-hand (the negative) side in "the judgment of this world"; and so on. His parables and teachings light up with a new meaning when followed with the basic distinction between the real and the unreal in view. Paul drew the line in the same way. In an allegory he contrasted the son of the handmaid "born after the flesh" with the son of the freewoman "born through promise"; and he declared: "The mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace."

As a concrete proposition, however, what can we do to escape from the dilemma in which we find ourselves by reason of the universal belief that man is materially constituted? So long as the physical factor is embraced in our consciousness we are under the necessity of caring for the body in legitimate respects, we are obliged to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." We must take necessary measures to feed and clothe the body and keep it fit to perform the duties required of it in its sphere, until we grow in the realization of spiritual truth to the point where the physical shall fade out of the picture. In practice, however, how unequally are the scales balanced! What an inordinate amount of time and attention mortals devote to the things of the flesh and the fleshly mind, and what an insignificant amount to the things that are real and eternal!

Haunted by the specter of their unconscious hypocrisy, men seek to avoid facing the issue, and become absorbed in various diversions which tend to shut out the vision of the real. How many persons, burdened by the sense of suffering and disappointment which results from an abnormal course of living, try to drown their sorrows in drink or drugs instead of tackling the problem at its root and freeing themselves from the delusion.

The exploitation of hypnotism illustrates the suggestive process by which unreal images are made to appear real to the spell-bound subject. The delusion under which he labors is evident enough to those in their right mind, as are the delusions of the sleeping dreamer. The world-wide acceptance of a delusion does not make it real, any more than the universal belief that the earth was flat made it so. If belief in the reality of materiality were unanimous, that circumstance would not make it anything more than a deep-seated delusion. Universal consent to a given misconception, however, lends an element of constancy and consistency to its claim that is wanting where the error is shared by only a few. Mortal man is so involved in a network of suggestions that he does not ordinarily get far enough out of its entanglements to discover the actual situation.

We find an analogy to the human situation in certain illustrative processes in which drawings are made in indelible ink, over fadable photographic prints, of features which it is desired to preserve. The prints are then bleached so as to leave only the ink lines. The moral is, are we delineating real qualities on the tablet of our consciousness, so that they will stand the acid test? In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul speaks of "the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain."

Although intelligent people no longer conceive of God as existing in the form of a magnified human personality, they still think of Him as working after the manner of men in their transactions with one another, along lines which fit their finite scheme of things. Consequently, many look for the revelation of the divine will in modes honored by custom and tradition, convinced that these are constituted and sanctified by the infinite One as channels for imparting a knowledge of the truth to mankind, in much the same way that human methods of intercourse are devised.

We can make sense out of the scheme of existence only by acknowledging God, changeless Principle, as the center and circumference of being, and trying to look out on the universe from a central standpoint, as we do in dealing with astronomical phenomena. Then, and only then, does the situation begin to assume aspects of order and harmony. According to Paul, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Divested of its traditional theological coloring, what does this signify except that Christ Jesus was the means of reconciling men to the deific view-point? He proved the Godlike standpoint by practical object-lessons, thereby enabling mortals to gain the correct outlook on life. Instead, however, of being reconciled to that standpoint, mankind still persists in bowing down to an ideal of God which fits in with its own point of view, it insists in interpreting the cosmos not from the Godlike standpoint of Jesus, but from its own eccentric, earthly position.

How like the nightmare of a dream is the doleful spectacle to which material sense testifies! A discordant race of mortals, dwelling by suffrance, as it were, on a planet still in the throes of evolving from chaotic conditions, ill-fitted in many ways for human occupation; a world cursed by earthquakes, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, floods, droughts, blight, famine, pestilence, savage beasts, poisonous reptiles, noxious insects, and last but not least, human ignorance, brutality, lust, greed! This is the type of world that material sense would have us believe was made by a perfect, righteous, and just God! Is it not high time to wake from the delusion of such a dream?

Is not Paul's counsel to the church at Rome timely even at this late day? Said he: "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

World-wide belief in the reality of the unreal has exposed mankind to nameless terrors and tortures. The blandishments and intriguing persuasiveness of evil conceal its satanic character. The cruelty and ferocity of the tiger instinct do not disclose themselves in the docile, inoffensive whelps. Until they recognize the element of fraud and delusion that masquerades in the disguise of a show-world, mortals will continue to play unwittingly into the hands of evil and invite disaster to their best intended plans and hopes.

As existence is pictured to material sense, the highest lights are offset by the deepest shadows. The acme of divinity finds its counterpart in the most diabolical gestures of evil. Because Christ Jesus expressed the highest ideal of good, his career called the most dastardly claims of evil out from under cover and led them to assume concrete form. The practical issue symbolized by the cross followed upon his recognition and exposure of the radical distinction between the spiritual real and the material unreal. His clean-cut, decisive stand on this point brought the negative belief of evil to the surface and stirred its human exponents to aggressive opposition, as is always the case under such circumstances.

The greatest drawback to genuine progress today is not the arrogant, aggressive form of evil against which reform forces direct their batteries; it is a general state of apathy and self-composure in the public mind and conscience, due to failure of the more enlightened elements of society to grasp the underlying issue. Religionists and reformers sometimes imagine they are grappling with the human problem intelligently by facing it from a mixed standpoint. So, while they are concentrating their forces on overt aggressions of evil, the actual culprit stalks abroad in a material garb of orderliness, respectability, and piety. The disposition to indulge irresponsible impulse in any form attests mortal man's kinship with nature, which breaks forth at intervals in violent disturbances.

The unruly forces let loose in a raging tempest that wreaks havoc and destruction, proceed from the same elemental source as do the balanced forces manifested in the serene, soothing atmosphere of a summer day, which invites repose and reverie; the contrasting displays simply exhibit the nature-god in different moods. The negative brand of good which appears in material conceptions is, at bottom, evil in disguise. Christendom has allowed its attention to be diverted to secondary or irrelevant considerations, while the main issue was passed over unrecognized.

The material régime constantly slips back, like a horse in a treadmill, because its efforts are conceived on an unstable foundation. The dead-weight of materiality drags mankind down to the earth-level of practical atheism, animality, the flesh. Clearly as Jesus defined the issue, and conclusively as he proved it by his works, it escaped the recognition of later generations, and human endeavor lapsed again to the former level. There it remained through dreary centuries of groping amidst reactionary and gruesome experiences.

The highest material hopes fade, the most cherished material trophies turn to ashes. Devolution succeeds evolution. The higher mankind builds on the sand of unreality, the more disastrous is the collapse of its structure. And great is "the fall thereof."

CHAPTER III.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF JESUS.

In order to form a balanced estimate of any historic character or occurrence, we need to take into account two qualifying factors—environment and perspective. Environment, the surrounding conditions under which an event takes place, lends atmosphere to the picture and enables us to visualize the thing in its relation to universal experience. The perspective of time helps us to view specific incidents and developments in their normal relation to previous and subsequent events, and thereby to appraise them more nearly at their proper value. Each seemingly independent detail in the consecutive order of experience, too, possesses a special significance because of its relation to other details or conditions in past, present, or future.

Nothing comes to pass in haphazard fashion; there is in each instance a logical reason for its coming about as it does at that particular time and in that particular way. Bird-life would not have assumed its present form had there been no air in which winged creatures could fly. The mushroom pushes upward through the sod in the dew of a summer morn because atmospheric conditions are favorable for its development at that time. A volcanic island bursts into view in mid-ocean because the pressure of internal forces reaches the limit at that point. And so with every phenomenon in the physical and mental realms; each individual detail in the picture has its proper setting.

In the case of past events we have to reckon, too, with the fact that we are dealing not with things as they actually occurred, but only with our impressions of what took place. We are not only contemplating a picture in which atmosphere and perspective figure, we are interpreting the subject-matter from a view-point which is influenced by our own peculiar mental complex of inherited tendencies, acquired beliefs, habits of thought, ways of looking at things, and so forth. How often the same accumulation of data provides material from which different historians or biographers draw varying and even contradictory conclusions. These things need to be considered in undertaking a study of the life and teaching of Jesus.

The prophet of Nazareth appeared on the scene at that particular time and place because conditions were ripe. The historic background for the setting of his career was rich in the ethical and spiritual qualities which make for racial superiority. A line of illustrious prophets, sturdy in their allegiance to the monotheistic ideal, had succeeded in weaning the thought of the Hebrew people from the idolatrous practices of an earlier period and bringing about a more intelligent conception of Deity. Those champions of divine idealism and practical righteousness were inspired by a sense of the deific presence that grew stronger as time went on. Centuries before the Christian era, Elisha beheld realistic visions of the sustaining presence and power of good in the midst of threatening circumstances. On one occasion, when his servant was dismayed at an overwhelming array of Syrian hosts, the prophet prayed that the young man's eyes might be opened; and "he saw, and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

Later, in his transcendent vision of the character and mission of the anticipated Messiah, Isaiah approached even more closely to the heart of spiritual reality. However colored it may have been by ancient superstitions, the thought of the spiritual mentors of the Jewish race reflected, in varying degrees, the image of the true God. So, from a remote past, the soil of the Hebrew mentality had been prepared, by the influence of God-fearing leaders, for the acceptance of a higher revelation of truth. Not that the religious rulers or the rank and file of the people were thus minded, but there was a saving remnant which maintained a sense of integrity and open-mindedness that augured well for the reception of a spiritual message.

So strong was the conviction of the discerning thought as the time drew near, that John the Baptist came confidently forward with a ringing proclamation of the fulfillment of the Messianic ideal in the mission of the man of Nazareth. This announcement was greeted with enthusiasm not only by the populace in general which flocked to John's standard, looking expectantly for deliverance from the Roman yoke at the hands of a mighty leader, but by the pharisaical element, the religious aristocracy of the period. Yet, how doomed to disappointment were those material-minded seekers for worldly prestige and power! Such was the situation in which the lowly prophet of Nazareth found himself.

The way he went about his redemptive mission, and the nature of the gospel he proclaimed, are an open book which one who runs may read. How, then, is it that, after the lapse of nearly twenty centuries of professedly Christian practice, there should be any question about these things, that his life and teaching should be a subject for serious controversy and misunderstanding? So wide was the subsequent divergence of opinion, that these matters have all along been a storm-center of theological disputation and ecclesiastical contention. Derided in his day and deified by succeeding generations, humbled by man and exalted by God, Jesus of Nazareth remains to-day an enigma to the world at large. It is still a pertinent question, "What think ye of the Christ?"

Whatever one's views on the subject, this is certain: the impress made upon the world's outlook and activities by the Galilean prophet places him in a class by himself and causes him to stand alone among men in his relation to the human problem. As the wake left behind by an ocean liner indicates the ship's magnitude, so the ever-broadening trend of religious and secular thought throughout Christendom attests the caliber of the most unique and commanding character in human history. Why, then, the wide difference of opinion regarding the meaning of his life-work?

There are many sides to the difficulty. In the first place, we possess little in the way of historic data from which to visualize the situation. The meager details concerning his personality, his early life and training, and even his public career, were originally contributed by a small circle of devoted followers, common folk, narrowly and provincially brought up and unaccustomed to accurate forms of expression. Those reports were handed down by tradition; and we know how elastic and unreliable tradition is at best.

He, the greatest of characters, left no manuscript and had no biographer, in the technical sense. Josephus, in his voluminous history, devotes less than a page to his life. All we have to go by is a few random side-lights, here and there, on his career, with little to connect up and coordinate the scanty details. These pictures, even in the fragmentary epics of the synoptic Gospels, consist largely of snap-shots of detached incidents in the public life of one whose mystic and symbolic utterances were frequently over the heads of his most receptive hearers. Not until he had left them, a dazed, wondering band, uncertain as to the import of his profoundest sayings and the ultimate significance of the new light that had come into their lives,—as a brilliant meteor sweeps the sky,—not until they had time to look back and ponder the whole experience, did the inner meaning of their Master's parables and injunctions really begin to dawn on the disciples' awakening consciousness. There seems to have been a subtle, elusive, intangible something about his manner of teaching, a mysterious flavor that made his language difficult to comprehend. Here and there, however, clean-cut, epigrammatic phrases and sentences stand out from the context with such vividness that they must have been branded in the consciousness of his listeners.

As to historic accuracy, even the more or less parallel narratives in the synoptic Gospels do not wholly agree concerning certain incidental matters of detail. Then, there is another factor that adds to the uncertainty; the imaginative Hebrew mind dealt largely in metaphors, figures of speech, extravagant imagery, suggestive symbolism, rather than in logical, matter-of-fact statement. Fact and fable, history and myth, poetry and prose, were loosely intermingled in their discourse. It was the idea, rather than the precise form of its expression, that appealed to the oriental type of mind. The views of even the educated class were liberally tainted with superstition. Moreover, the gospel narrators had little occasion to consider how later generations, trained to think in more exact terms, would construe their descriptions.

After the briefest mention of a few scattered incidents in Jesus' early life, there is an hiatus in the record up to the time when he suddenly flashed on the scene with character and capacities matured and ripe for action. A single episode in his youthful career (his discussion with the learned doctors of the law in the temple at Jerusalem) furnishes an illuminating glimpse of the trend and development of his thought and ideals at that formative period. Even then he had ideas of his own and had grown in mental and spiritual stature beyond the most mature minds of his day and generation.

What marvelous strides his unfolding nature must have made in the nearly two decades before we find him stepping forth fully equipped for the greatest task that ever devolved on a human individual! What of the queryings, the yearnings, the seasons of doubt, testing, trial, the experiences of meeting and mastering daily problems that doubtless confronted him along the way? Those things may ever remain sealed in the eternal silences. How far had his demonstration of the spirituality of being been carried up to the time of his public début? Here indeed is food for reflection.

During those fruitful years, an increasing conviction of the divine presence and power must have brought premonitions of a future career distinct from that allotted to other men, until at length he was prepared to go forth and face an incredulous world single-handed, with God alone to rely on for support. All along the way, the inspiring messages of the Old Testament prophets served as stepping-stones over which his eager sense mounted to ever higher levels.

Before the earliest authentic accounts of which we have knowledge were indited, it seems more than likely that the original stories of the thrilling episodes in the Master's dramatic career, as well as his reported sayings, became more or less adulterated by over-elaboration, or modified by personal interpretations. Such is almost certain to be the case with descriptions passed along by word of mouth. The greatest obstacle of all, however, to a right understanding of his words and works lies in the nature of the problem with which they dealt. It is difficult enough, under the most favorable circumstances, to convey spiritual truth to those prepared to accept it; but when it comes to dealing with minds largely unfitted, by native capacity and training, to grasp spiritual meanings, the case is still more formidable.

In this instance there is still another difficulty. Occurrences originally detailed in the Aramaic vernacular had to be translated later into the Greek tongue by persons unacquainted with the conditions at first hand. And lastly, there is the additional handicap of securing an adequate rendering of the Greek text into English by scholars whose personal points of view enter into the equation. Altogether, then, we have to reckon with a combination of circumstances that makes an accurate knowledge of the situation more or less problematical. Each reader has to fill in the fragmentary sketch as best he may; and the element thus supplied is sure to vary according to the standpoint and mental bias of the interpreter. All things considered, it is not strange that there should be wide diversities of opinion concerning the most conspicuous character and the most striking occurrences in history—the life and work of Jesus.

It is the spectacular in experience that appeals most strongly to the popular craving; and that factor is most liable to exaggeration and amplification by imaginative minds. That events quite out of the ordinary took place in connection with Jesus' career is evident from any point of view; there must be a starting-point for even the most fantastic stories. That the populace of Galilee and Judaea was profoundy stirred at that period by some extraordinary development would seem to be beyond dispute. Just how far impressions to-day agree with the facts in the case is another matter.

There are some who believe in the infallibility of the gospel record as it stands. With such it is futile to argue. Others would subject the Biblical accounts to critical analysis in order to determine their historic accuracy. In neither case is it possible to adduce tangible evidence of the operation of those subtle metaphysical factors which elude the grasp of the intellectual faculty. And that, after all, is the paramount consideration. To determine the formal facts with technical precision, even were that possible, would still leave the crux of the matter untouched.

There is, however, a point of approach by which it is possible to penetrate to the heart of the issue with X-ray certainty, one almost overlooked during the intervening centuries in spite of its obvious correspondence with Jesus' recorded teaching. The method is that of establishing direct contact, through experience, with the source of his inspiration and power, and testing in practice certain aspects of doctrine repeatedly stressed in his injunctions to his followers. He declared, indeed, that the fulfillment of this condition would give the key to his words and deeds. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also." Such was the formula he gave to the world. Unison of cause, however seemingly remote in time and space, is proven by unison of effect.

His position differs from that of all other master minds in this respect, that it sets forth a demonstrable basis on which to prove the truth of being. We know that a musical instrument is in tune when its tones vibrate in harmony with standard pitch. We know that the science of numbers is based on an unvarying principle, and that our understanding of that principle is correct, when we obtain results that are uniform with those of other mathematicians. In a similar way, we have a means of testing the reliability, as far as its general implications are concerned, of the gospel record of the doings of the great Demonstrator of the truth; a method of certifying the results he obtained, by applying our own understanding, in its degree, to the solution of similar problems. For, the rule that proves itself in our case we know to be that which enabled him to do his "mighty works."

"These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." On this acid test he rested his case; and with this assurance he committed his cause to posterity.

Thus by one stroke he placed the human problem on a single, simple basis,—the *unity, unison,* and *universality* of spiritual activity as the manifestation of one Principle, God. There was no room in his program for theological division or discrepancy, no room for diversity of creeds or ecclesiastical schisms. He put the case in a nut-shell on the ground of demonstration. What other standard has his authorization? How far, alas, has Christendom wandered from that standard! To what lengths have sophistry and subterfuge gone in trying to escape the plain requirements of his platform!

How many devout Christians have recognized no higher ground for their faith than the mere fact that *it says thus and so in the Bible!* Because of this supposed necessity, they have feared the result of the higher criticism, lest it should show the historic record to be unreliable. Jesus, however, established Christian faith on a sounder basis for time to come. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from myself." Thus the only trustworthy evidence of the truth comes to the individual through proving it in his own case. No "higher criticism" can disprove anything that we can prove for ourselves; and all beyond that is a mere matter of technicalities or speculation.

He looked directly to the absolute (spiritual) source for his inspiration, wisdom, and power, instead of groping in relative channels for a clue to the truth. He declared that "the Spirit of truth" would unfold the inner meaning of his teaching to those who sought to put it into practice. We may, for example, obtain an insight into the episode of his interview with the Samaritan woman by applying his illuminating exposition of "the water of life" in our own experience, and proving the spontaneity and constancy of spiritual activity as it wells up in our consciousness. And so with the many other inspiring incidents and parables throughout the gospel records.

What efforts have been wasted, what animosities engendered, what rivers of blood spilled in sectarian strife through weary years in a vain endeavor to achieve salvation by some other means than demonstration of the Principle of Man, outlined and practised by the Master, and designated by him as an indispensable qualification for discipleship! When will the prodigal return to his father's house and receive his benediction?

Jesus' mission, according to his own statement, was "to seek and save that which was lost." What, then, is it to be *lost?* Is it anything more or less than to be alienated or estranged from God, the source of one's being? "In him we live, and move, and have our being," exclaimed the apostle Paul to the Athenian philosophers on Mars Hill,—a scientific fact directly and forcibly stated. Mortal man, cut off or insulated, as it were, from conscious, vital contact or union with the spiritual source and substance of life, is lost. An electric light cannot function when the wire that supplies the current is cut. Likewise the mortal type of so-called man is deprived of the power to exercise the prerogative of the spiritual, real Man—God's Man—who has dominion over material conditions.

What deprives him of that power? The answer is, Ignorance and sin. "Lust, when it hath conceived beareth sin; and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death." Now, the Greek word translated *sin,* here and elsewhere in the New Testament, means, primarily, *error, missing the mark* (as in shooting). By restricting the signification of the term to moral transgression, the translators have "missed the mark" and inadvertently aided in narrowing religious conceptions of the scope of Jesus' redemptive mission. For if one thing is plainer than another, it is, that the type of salvation proclaimed and practised by Jesus embraced deliverance from physical as well as mental and moral ills.

It involved healing disease and correcting discordant conditions in environment, as well as regenerating the moral sense. That all erratic symptoms proceed from a common root-stock, he made evident when he healed a case of palsy. "Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins [errors] (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up they bed, and go unto thy house. And he arose, and departed to his house."

The Greek word translated *forgiven* means, primarily, *sent away, dismissed*. By stating the case as he did, was it not the Master's evident intention to show that his correction, by knowing the truth, of the victim's chronic conviction that he was helpless, destroyed the root of a mental and moral delusion, and, in so doing, removed the impediment to his free action? Suffering humanity needs to be relieved of "sin" (error, aberration) in its physical as well as its moral expression. Abnormal bodily conditions, which index ignorance of the operation of spiritual law, need rectifying as well as do the results of moral infraction of that law. The innocent are certainly as deserving as are the willful.

By word and deed the great Physician revealed

God as not implicated in the material, sensuous order, in which evil figures along with good. He came "not to destroy [anything that existed in truth and reality], but to fulfill." He destroyed nothing that God upholds or sanctions; he simply eliminated from human consciousness foreign, abnormal images that were projected outwardly on a space-time screen as symptoms of disease, disorder, and the like. Imperfections in a motion-picture are corrected not by trying to erase them from the screen, but by removing the defects from the camera-film that causes them.

In freeing a certain sufferer from a physical malady, Jesus referred to the victim as one "whom Satan [a mythical personification of falsity] hath bound." Certainly he would not have so characterized that condition or presumed to remove it, had it existed in the order of God's appointing. We read that "God is no respecter of persons." Does He, then, authorize the distribution of special favors in a world that exists in His consciousness, and with His sanction, in the fashion that it appears to the senses? Jesus' spiritual discernment enabled him to *un*-see conditions which to material sense seemed to exist, but which, in the true sense, did not. "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up."

Here, let us digress a little. Radical revision of human concepts is the order of the day. Theories of matter, energy, space, time, and nearly everything else that comes within the scope of our observation and experience, have undergone revolutionary changes within the past decade or two. Text-books on physics, chemistry, biology, and other natural sciences, hardly get into print before they are out of date. Scientific opinions are "up in the air" at present. Theological views, on the contrary, have suffered no such striking change. Must we infer from this that current beliefs about God have reached such perfection that they admit of no further recasting?

As a matter of fact, the recognition of another step ahead is even now forcing itself on the religious world. As the senses have betrayed mankind with regard to objective aspects of the cosmos, so reason and logic have betrayed it with regard to metaphysical aspects. Christendom has been blinded to Jesus' revelation of the nature of God, by pretentious claims of materialism, mistakenly put forth under the aegis of science; and by assenting to those claims, dogmatic theology has found itself stranded on the reef of a dualistic philosophy.

In taking another forward step in the understanding of God, we are really going back some twenty centuries to primitive scenes in a period supposedly far behind our own in knowledge and enlightenment. Successive disclosures of modern science have incidentally taught us a lesson in humility; for we have been obliged constantly to admit the fallibility of human belief. For that reason, thought is the better prepared to launch out from traditional moorings, on the sea of spiritual progress, under the leadership of a higher faculty than reason, namely, spiritual intuition. Jesus of Nazareth anticipated the course of worldly advancement and planted the standard of the true God far ahead of our own position to-day. By acknowledging God as Spirit, infinite perfection, uncontaminated and uncompromised by any taint or suspicion of evil even to the extent of countenancing or recognizing it, he found himself in a position to exercise the full measure of divine authority in removing material obstacles to normal expression. He demonstrated the spiritual integrity of Man on the basis of the spiritual integrity of God. He showed that the acknowledgment of a one hundred per cent standard of Deity was the most potent factor in raising the standard of man. Flawless premises are essential to flawless conclusions.

A consistent cause is necessary to establish consistent effects. Jesus' discernment of the true God, and his complete conformity to the godlike standard, gave him marvelous power in helping mortals to manifest normality on their plane,—in freeing from misconception and mal-manifestation those "whom Satan [had] bound." Not until men discard the notion that God recognizes an adversary, or deceiver, in His scheme of creation, and come to realize that evil and materiality do not exist in the clear light of heaven, can they avoid playing into the hands of the "adversary" whom they seek to defeat, and efface the stigma of discord and disease from the picture on the screen of human experience. "Let God be true, and every man a liar."

As we come to understand God better, we are prepared to get an inkling of what the cosmos, as it exists in Him, is like—the real order behind the blurred, scrambled hodgepodge of discordant impressions and grating, conflicting operations to which the senses testify, and which, too generally, pass current as God's handiwork. When the fragmentary glimpses of heaven's law, order, beauty, and harmony, which mortals get even through the turmoil, confusion, and tragedy of human struggling and writhing, are rounded out in the vision of the perfect whole,—then "the new heaven and the new earth" appear as an ever-existent reality, only awaiting recognition.

"The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound." So sings Browning. Down through the ages, philosophical minds have tried, by clever reasoning, to find an explanation of the phenomenon, *evil;* nor do they seem to be any nearer the goal than they were at the start. Were evil capable of being accounted for from a true standpoint, the standard of truth would disappear. It is begging the question to call evil "undeveloped good" or "good in the making." Evil is evil; and calling it by another name does not rob it of its stigma. It is simply a negation, a lie. From the standpoint of truth there is nothing in it. Yet it is as impossible to see this from the standpoint of material sense as it is to see how there could be such a thing as, for instance, uncreated being. Here we have another illustration of the fact that material sense cannot grasp the truth; it is not so constituted. Jesus said of its personified expression, "There is no truth in him."

He expected his followers to do the kind of works he did. On more than one occasion he rebuked them for their lack of faith. Said he, in the metaphorical language of the Orient: "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Was he dealing in idle words, or did he intend to convey a practical lesson by the metaphor? In the first place, what did he mean by *faith?* The English word fails to convey the force of the Greek original (also translated *belief* in many New Testament passages), which signifies *firm persuasion, implicit and unwavering confidence, unyielding adherence to the truth.* To Jesus, the presence and power of God was no conjectural matter, it was demonstrable fact. So firmly did he lay hold of this fact, that he could say, "I and my Father are one." And the same sense of oneness with infinite Mind, he labored, in season and out, to inculcate in the minds of his followers. "The works that I do shall ye do also."

With his object-lessons in proving the truth before them, the disciples came to experience this conscious awareness of the divine presence and power; so that they were able, in a considerable degree, to do the kind of works he did. Thus he inaugurated a new dispensation in practical human experience, a dispensation based on spiritual understanding of the law and order of being, existent in and upheld by God. Yet, strange as it may seem, this greatest and most pregnant revelation in history was allowed to fade away and become ineffective in the lives of succeeding generations,—buried beneath the débris of futile theological dogmas and ecclesiastical paraphernalia.

It was a living gospel that the prophet of Nazareth proclaimed. It reached to the root of the human problem and brought the individual face to face with himself in Principle, God. So firmly did his earlier followers grasp the situation, that they were undismayed by the specter of death. They faced hardships, torture, stoning, crucifixion, with a buoyant, triumphant attitude, uplifted and sustained by the consciousness that they were winning their way to eternal life along the pathway he had blazed.

He saw through the sham and hollowness of materially conceived existence. He realized that material beliefs and all that went with them—material body, material selfhood, and material treasures—were doomed to extinction. To the exemplary, self-righteous Pharisees he declared, "Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins." Has the issue changed since the apostolic era? Is not the world-problem the same to-day as it was when he diagnosed it and pointed the way to its solution? Is salvation from the consequences of misbelief to be achieved now in any easier and more agreeable way? He held out little hope for the rank and file of humanity, bound up as it was in a perishing, dying, mortal sense of living. "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life." "This is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light." "He that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life." "Narrow is the gate, and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it."

All may not enjoy equal worldly advantages. Material sense is arbitrary, ruthless, inexorable, a hard taskmaster. Even the great Exemplar could not be true to his ideal and avoid paying the tribute exacted by "that which is born of the flesh" in the shape of injustice, hatred, and malice. Those who think to escape the ordeal and win the crown without experiencing the cross fail to grasp the human problem. According to Jesus, there is no provision in divine law and order for a balancing up of fortune and misfortune, of "evening things up," here or hereafter. "Except ye repent [experience a radical change of mind], ye shall all in like manner perish." It is through helping others solve the problem of living aright that one makes progress in solving the problem for one's self.

So long as one is living according to the flesh, one is "under the law" of the flesh, subject to the vicissitudes and penalties that go along with a material standard; and one can be saved from these merciless consequences only by starting to live from the spiritual standpoint. The rule and order of spiritual activity is fulfilled by giving out. According to the parable, the man with one talent lost all that he had because he held on to it instead of putting it into circulation for the general good.

Jesus consistently discriminated between genuine life, the real and eternal activity of being,—that which is linked with God and which, therefore, cannot be destroyed or impaired,—and the infringing, material sense of life; self-conceived, self-determined impulse, which opposes itself to divine law and order, and ends by destroying itself and fading out of the picture. It is highly significant that, throughout the New Testament, spiritual life, and the material, would-be type are uniformly designated by two different Greek words.

"He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." The seeming discrepancy in this passage is due to failure on the part of the translators to observe this all-important distinction. Both Greek words are rendered alike, here and elsewhere in the New Testament, as *life* (or *soul*). Now, the very point which the Master sought to drive home was the contrast between the things indicated by the two words. He had a way of going directly to the heart of the matter in whatever he undertook. In that way he forestalled argument by clinching the matter at hand before his objectors had a chance to sidestep the issue.

Adequately translated, the above-quoted passage states the human situation in its naked simplicity. "He that loveth his life [fleshly existence] loseth it; and he that loseth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal [ever-existent life]." In other words, he whose affections are centered on the material plane, whose faith is pinned to material means and methods, eventually suffers the fate of those things; but he who subordinates the material to the spiritual, survives the ordeal and finds himself in the imperishable order of things.

To call that "life" which is but a sham substitute, an infringement of the real article, an apparition projected from an erratic standpoint, does not make it real; any more than claiming that a hand-carved idol is the image of Deity makes it such. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." A truly original and startling statement when taken seriously at its par value—so startling, indeed, that later generations robbed it of its vital significance by referring it to the category of figurative speech. The Greek word translated *eternal* (here and throughout the New Testament) means, literally, *ever-being, always existent.* If an individual's sense of living is bound up with the mutable and perishable, what is left for him when these are gone? If, on the contrary, he grasps and assimilates the truth that God is the Principle of his being, he has "passed out of death into life," he is "saved."

To separate one's self from bodily consciousness, "the mind of the flesh," and find one's true selfhood in Spirit, God, is the issue. Paul phrases it thus: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." So long has Christendom viewed the life and career of Jesus through a haze of theological beliefs that his literal statements of fact have lost much of their original freshness and poignancy. We miss the fire, the glow, the unction, the directness of appeal of his heart-spoken sentences; the realism of his description, the contagion of his inspiration as he taught the multitudes in parables or expounded "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" to the disciples. Distance lends enchantment; but that very enchantment lures men into assuming that the words spoken with such force and incisiveness to his contemporaries were not intended to apply with equal force to future generations.

Said Paul to the Corinthian brethren, concerning the Jews of his day, "Whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart." In the same way today, is not the prevailing religious sense largely insulated from direct, vital contact with the living Christ by the dust and cobwebs of belief, dogmas, creeds, and ecclesiasticism in general? So far astray has Christendom wandered in its efforts to apprehend the secret of Jesus' mission and message of complete salvation—physical, mental, and moral—that his gospel comes to the world like a distant echo instead of a vibrant voice at hand. Intervening centuries have cast an artificial glamour over the personality of the man of Nazareth, which causes him to appear to mankind today in a distant relation, in a capacity different from that which he sustained to his own generation. Had religionists taken him at his word and accepted the issue as he outlined it on the basis of demonstration, the brilliant light that illumined Christian history for a brief period in apostolic days would not have died down, or faded in the distance like a receding comet.

While his preëminence as a religious leader has been undisputed, he has seldom been thought of by the world at large as a philosopher. Nevertheless, students of the human problem are coming by degrees to see that he was, after all, the greatest philosopher of the ages, because he got at the heart of transcendent issues that other philosophers have only toyed with. And more than that, in the general readjustment of scholarly opinion towards which many lines of investigation in independent fields are surely converging, he is certain to rank also as the foremost scientific discoverer. On what ground, then, does his claim to distinction in that field rest?

So long as the dogmatic tendency of the nineteenth century prevailed in scientific circles, the metaphysical factor was given little consideration in formulating theories of the universe. Consequently, during that era the results of scientific research tended to encourage a materialistic philosophy of life. More recently, however, men of eminence in the world of science have come to take a broader outlook. The collapse, since the beginning of the present century, of the scientific structure of the recent past, reared on a foundation of material observations, has forced investigators to turn their attention to other methods of dealing with the whole problem of existence. They are coming to see that the metaphysical factor cannot be ignored in forming correct estimates of the value even of physical phenomena; that, indeed, the physical must be subordinated to the metaphysical in any scheme which undertakes to deal with cause as well as effect.

Outstanding developments in the field of natural science within the last quarter of a century have swung steadily around in the direction of the position of the Nazarene prophet, to the effect that the reality behind physical phenomena must be sought in the metaphysical realm. Straws in the wind indicate that science is preparing, without fully realizing it, to rear a more enduring structure on a broader base; that it is coming to recognize the necessity of digging below the surface of material evidences and laying its foundation-stones on bed-rock.

Jesus anticipated all this and more, centuries before the modern movement to place human knowledge on a scientific basis was conceived. It is possible to go from Boston to New York by taking an easterly course around the globe. In a similar way modern science, having headed away from the goal, finds itself approaching its destination from the opposite direction. Jesus' spirituality led him instinctively to take the direct course; and during all these years the world has been trying, without realizing it, to catch up with him. His claim to distinction as a scientific discoverer lies in this, that he arrived immediately and intuitively at the basic law or rule of existence—a rule that overrules the claims of material so-called law.

This rule might be stated categorically, in modern terms, in a formula something like this: *Spiritual power is manifest in inverse ratio to the display of material force.* The technically trained mentality of to-day finds it difficult to recognize in the simple utterances that sprang directly from the Master's heart an equivalent of its studied abstractions; an idea sounds so much more convincing when couched in scholastic terms! Jesus enunciated the profoundest truths in the colloquial language of the wayside and market-place which untutored minds could comprehend. "I can of myself do nothing." "The Father abiding in me doeth his works." In these words he gave a human touch to a practical aspect of universal truth to which the formula given above is closely correlated. These brief citations may, indeed, be said to epitomize his whole attitude towards the modus of living.

Let us see how it works out. He consistently declared at all times that his mighty works were accomplished by a power not his own. And more than that, he pointed to the fact that it was because he utterly renounced personal control and material methods that such incomparable results could be achieved through him; that he was nothing more than a channel or vehicle through which the truth was brought home to human consciousness. An electric car will not run unless it is connected with the wire that supplies the current. The power is always available, but it becomes effective only when a medium of contact is provided. It is not the function of that medium to generate power, but to make it practically operative.

Christ Jesus acted as a mediator between God and man by showing mortals how to obtain access to the God-power. He eschewed arts and practices that mortal man deems essential to the realization of success in any field. He reversed the accepted order by making himself nothing, that God might be All-in-all. He removed personal sense from the equation, that the working of the higher law might be made manifest. Spiritual activity comes to the surface in human experience only as material striving subsides; hence the significance of our formula. The pettiness of human endeavor appears by contrast with the might and majesty of spiritual efficiency. "Be still, and know that I am God." In its effort to win against obstacles, mankind depends on the exaltation and exploitation of personal sense; Jesus, on the other hand, became a transparency, as it were, through which spiritual light could shine into the darkness of human consciousness.

He claimed no special endowment that enabled him to do what others could not do. On the contrary, he stressed the point that those who would be his disciples must follow in his footsteps. Had he achieved the results by some personal power or special gift, others might not be expected to emulate his example. "I can of myself do nothing"—about as unequivocal a statement as anyone could make. Would he have rebuked his followers for their meager showing had they not possessed a similar capacity to do the works? Why, then, was he able to excel them in the magnitude of his accomplishment? Evidently, because he had gotten more fully rid of obstructing, material sense, which is a non-conductor of divine power. A sooty spark-plug emits a feeble spark. A dingy mirror is a poor reflector.

His method was wholly original. He did not bring about results by any power resident in himself or in the material realm. Nor did he petition the Almighty to dispense special favors. He prayed thus: "Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude which standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me." He simply acknowledged and accepted, as an ever-present fact, the harmony that exists in the spiritual order. He took human interference out of the way in the transaction, and so made it possible for God's work to be manifest. The whole genius and fabric of "this world" rests on the belief of self-will, selfassertiveness, the power of a human mind, material force. The intriguing Pilate, irritated at Jesus' persistent silence under questioning, prodded him with the half-tantalizing thrust, "Knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?" And failing to receive satisfaction, he shirked responsibility by turning his charge over to Herod in true diplomatic fashion. The power of Rome, which was behind the skeptical procurator, faded long ago; but the power wielded by the self-effacing Nazarene is only as yet beginning to dawn on the world in the twilight of a new day.

The great, decisive battle of life comes in letting go. Jesus fought it out in the wilderness at the beginning of his public career, and again at the grand climax in Gethsemane, where the final decision had to be made. Should he stake the outcome of his mission for humanity on the issue he had maintained and defended up to that point, namely, the superiority of the spiritual over the material? Here was the supreme test. And he met it by eliminating himself and every human consideration from the equation, that the power of Spirit might be demonstrated in a triumphant master-stroke.

So he faced the cross, the utmost token of self-abasement, which, according to material evidences, meant the final wiping out of his work for humankind. The result, as must ever be the case under such conditions, was wholly contrary to material expectations. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." Except the material conception of power yield to the spiritual, men must continue to strive and struggle in vain, blind to the solution of the human problem. With his submission to death on the cross, the last shred of self and materiality in his character disappeared, and the paradoxical nature of fleshly existence was demonstrated in the fullest sense. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it." Thus he proved the rule in its highest application.

His life, his sayings, and his deeds have been an inspiration to the world for generations. Yet men have overlooked the one vital thing that gave him his superlative influence in human affairs, namely, his willingness to face the apparent wrecking of his world-mission in order to remain true to the spiritual ideal. As it turned out, however, this supreme act of trusting God and His spiritual law in the face of almost certain defeat (so it seemed to human view) retrieved all he had surrendered and a thousand times more, and set an unimpeachable standard for mankind to emulate.

How has the world reacted to this standard? To be sure, the cross is the accepted symbol of the Christian faith; but in what sense is the cross that adorns the spires of churchly edifices, and is cherished as a sacred emblem by devout worshippers, the cross of Calvary? Do Christians to-day recognize their obligation to maintain their Lord's attitude of supreme trust in the God he acknowledged? Does organized Christianity turn down the arguments of opportunism and worldly policy in the unequivocal, clean-cut fashion that he did? Or, does it adapt its course to suit current ideals of prosperity? Does it meet the crucial test of his ideal by relying on God, who is Spirit, to tip the scale against material inducements? "If the salt have lost its saltness, wherewith will ye season it?"

Paul, inspired by the same ideal, declared: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." And tradition has it that he experienced the same tragic end as his Lord. Peter, in his dramatic appeal to the rulers at Jerusalem, exclaimed: "He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders. . . . Neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." The Greek word translated *name,* as here used, has more than a merely appellative signification; it denotes the character of the thing referred to. Clearly, what the apostle meant to convey was, that the Principle of which the crucified one was the highest exponent, and not the mere matter of a name, enabled the impotent man to receive his strength.

Christ Jesus showed the way out of the human dilemma for every one who would escape the consequences of having been born into the fleshly state. Somewhere along the journey, each heaven-bound pilgrim is sure, from the nature of the case, to experience a taste of the mount of transfiguration (the vision of the real, the transcendent glory of spiritual being, which material sense shuts out or veils); Gethsemane (the struggle to let go of self); Calvary (the tragedy of the unreal); and the resurrection (the triumph of the spiritual). These episodes are more than allegories, they stand out as waymarks of individual experience for all who would solve the problem of being.

In the sense that self-will is the positive element in the fleshly mind, fear is the negative element; it makes for mental and moral paralysis. "Fear not, only believe" was the slogan of the Master's campaign against material falsity. Fear cramps and contracts, it draws in the lines of human activity and curtails freedom. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Here, again, the words have more than a metaphorical signification. We all know, in limited ways, how the absence of fear, even in a relative degree, often confers extraordinary powers. It makes daring feats and spectacular stunts possible. Every one could swim naturally, as do animals, were it not for the disconcerting effect of fear. Ignorance and fear mark the boundary-lines that limit human experience.

Mortal man is born and educated in a school of fear, until living becomes a fearful thing. The subconscious realm of his nature is filled with images of fear and foreboding. The somnambulist treads with safety where a waking person would come to grief through fright. Jesus slept in the boat on the sea of Galilee while his disciples struggled frantically with the elements in the storm. The disciples slept in Gethsemane, oblivious of the fact that their Lord was encountering the last spasm of fear and resistance in a momentous struggle with the flesh. Mortals are fearful under conditions that should inspire courage and confidence, and they succumb to a sense of apathy when they should be awake.

It is hard to realize the measure of freedom and immunity from material decrees that would be possible to one who was wholly absolved from fear of bodily injury and death under all circumstances. Self-consciousness is a blend of misplaced confidence and fear. Even on a lower plane, where ignorance of spiritual law obtains, the absence of self-consciousness makes for freedom; effort of expression diminishes as the sense of self is lost in an absorbing ideal. Two students may pursue the same course at school. One wastes his energies in vainly striving to master problems; the other learns naturally, without effort, for the interior channels of his mind are so open that he has free access to the universal storehouse of wisdom. A skillful hunter will raise his gun and fire in a twinkling at an object on the wing, without conscious thought of his aim. One person will mount a bicycle for the first time and ride away confidently like a veteran; another will practise for days in fear and trembling before he gains sufficient courage to venture timidly forth on the highway.

Genius is the capacity to cut loose from the conventional, limited sense of self and launch out in wider fields. Handel declared that while composing The Messiah he "did see the heavens opened and the great God himself sitting upon his throne." Need we wonder that the entire score occupied only twenty-five days in writing? Says Paracelsus: "A man comes into possession of creative power by uniting his own mind with the Universal Mind, and he who succeeds in doing so will be in possession of the highest possible wisdom."

The drudge toils on, bewailing his lot and fancy-ing that the difficulty lies in externals over which he has no control. He attributes his hardships to luck, fate, or the dispensation of Providence, little dreaming that the situations in which he finds himself are due to a lack of understanding of spiritual law on his part. Even if the particular circumstances that occasion his misfortune were removed, he would still be in a position to encounter others possibly more annoying. One of the most beautiful allegories in literature, illustrating the realization of ideals through right-thinking, is Hawthorne's sketch, The Great Stone Face. That remarkable curiosity of nature became the ideal of the peasant boy, Ernest. Gradually the lineaments of his features assumed the aspect of his ideal; until one day the bystanders, to whom he was declaring its beauty, discovered in him its embodiment.

From these human examples we obtain a hint of the spontaneity of consciousness released, even in a degree, from the binding obligations of ordinary material bonds. If faith in the ideal, apart from spiritual understanding, can achieve such results, what limits can be set to its exercise when scientifically directed?

Jesus drew profound lessons from simple subjects. Trees, hills, vineyards, wheat, mustard-seed, birds, fishes,—things with which people were familiar in every-day life,—served to bring spiritual truths home to his hearers. He lived close to nature. His earlier ministry centered around the beautiful lake of Galilee where, no doubt, many of his youthful dreams had taken shape. Throughout his course he withdrew periodically from the multitude, and even from his disciples, to commune with the infinite in the solitude of nature. Towards the close of his career, according to Luke, he was teaching every day in the temple; "and every night he went out, and lodged in the mount that is called the mount of Olives."

In the solitude and silence of the woods and great open spaces, apart from the bustle and turmoil of civilization, one may feel the majesty and power of the overbrooding Spirit whose presence brings order and harmony out of chaos and conflict. The power of silence is one of the most difficult things for restless mortals to discover — the power that defies measurement in terms of volts, amperes, or calories, and yet, which sustains the universe. In silence one may come in contact with an infinite environment of spiritual ideas, "the kingdom of heaven."

In the midst of outward circumstances of the most discouraging sort, Jesus preserved a calm, even temper, and exhibited such apparent indifference to his surroundings as to amaze even his most intimate disciples; for they had not grown to appreciate the meaning of his inner life. Even in the face of impending crucifixion he prayed that his "joy" might be "fulfilled in them." He referred to himself as "the Son of man, which is in heaven."

It is comparatively easy to appraise the status of Jesus, the Christ, as we contemplate his career through the magnifying lens of nineteen centuries made luminous by his achievements; but what would have been our attitude towards the plain Galilean carpenter had we lived in Palestine when he set out on his public ministry, an obscure layman with none of the credentials of an authorized teacher, maligned by the religious aristocracy and discredited by the recognized conservators of a system supposedly established and fostered by divine authority?

While certain of the terms in which his philosophy was stated may sound archaic to modern ears, his diagnosis of the human problem and his manner of dealing with it are being increasingly justified by the course of events.

How many persons, discouraged at the prospect of ever arriving at the truth because of the conflicting claims of religious belief, turn away and seek satisfaction in worldly attractions, which promise at least something more definite and tangible in the way of practical experience. So long have professing Christians gazed into the sepulcher of dead beliefs, where tradition has buried their Savior, that they fail to turn about and recognize the presence of the risen Christ. The message still echoes down the centuries: "He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him." Was it not in Galilee, in regions remote from the established seat of religious traditionalism, that the "mighty works" were first performed? And is it not in the Galilee of human experience to-day that our own demonstration of the truth which he exemplified begins?

"There shall ye see him." When the religious world accepts the test of orthodoxy prescribed by Christ Jesus, then will Christian warriors beat the swords of theological controversy into plowshares of spiritual understanding, and the spears of ecclesiastical rivalry into pruning hooks of spiritual demonstration.

CHAPTER IV.

FREEDOM.

The craving for freedom is the ruling motive and incentive in all intelligent creatures. Indeed, the urge is manifested subconsciously among the lowest organic forms in a blind, incoherent reaching out for means of self-expression. As consciousness reaches higher levels in the animal kingdom, this deep-seated instinct seeks more definite means of satisfaction. The new-born infant cries automatically because it is uncomfortable and wants to be relieved of a disquieting sense; but it does not know what it is all about.

Animals distinguish between things that give them pleasure and those that occasion distress; and they learn to choose accordingly. They not only want to be released from annoying conditions in their environment, but they want to be free to do as they please in all events, regardless of circumstances. Having become freedom-conscious, they are disposed to resist any interference with what they regard as their rights. In the human creature possessed of self-consciousness, another factor appears. Mortals have a more or less distinct sense of moral obligation. Conscience makes appeal in ways not dictated by self-interest; in ways, rather, that are often directly contrary to selfish considerations. The higher faculty contends with lower propensities for supremacy.

Thus the first faint beams of spiritual light begin to dawn out of the darkness of material sense. The typical human creature recognizes, in a degree, a higher ideal of freedom than that which is based on the desire to gratify self-centered impulse. Indeed, he finds himself ill at ease while living in selfish disregard of others' rights and interests; and he can free himself from the disturbed state of mind only by fulfilling his obligations to his fellows. Nor is this all; there is a still higher ideal of freedom which comes from a spiritual understanding of the nature of being. Here we face the inevitable paradox that recurs whenever spiritual sense and its mock rival, material sense, appear contrasted. The individual gains true, spiritual freedom only as he subordinates the material ideal of freedom, the ideal that mankind has been taught to cherish as an instinct implanted in human nature by divine decree.

In its lowest range, this universal instinct expresses itself in the guise of license — unbridled impetuosity, material madness; in its intermediate range, as liberty — exemption from interference; in its highest range, as spiritual release — the loss of merely personal desire in the idea of infinite intelligence. Then, at length, Man comes into his own as the manifestation of his Principle, God. The human discord, strife, woe, that drag society down to the earth-level result from misapprehension of the nature of freedom; those symptoms denote the extent to which mortals err (miss the mark) in their struggle for freedom. Jesus uncovered the remedy in the exhortation, "Seek ye first his [God's] kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." In other words, the only way to sample real freedom is to face God's universe from the Godlike standpoint; then human necessity will be provided for in response to the rule of harmony as conceived on its plane.

The mortal type of freedom is as treacherous and elusive as the will-o'-the-wisp that flickers and dances over a bottomless quagmire. Mortals mistake mere independence for freedom. They escape from one form of slavery only to find themselves in bondage to other forms. The chattel slave, freed from his owner, frequently becomes the victim of industrial slavery; and even if he succeeds in acquiring a competence, he may still be in bondage to enslaving habits. The condition of mortal man at best is one of bondage to a false sense. Each individual pursues his own ideal of freedom because he believes its realization will insure him a greater degree of happiness. Happiness, however, is a state of mind; and if it be predicated on a material basis, it will pale and, in time, leave the jaded victim forlorn and helpless.

A bird escaping from a cage in mid-ocean gains freedom in one sense, only to become the victim of a more disastrous fate. The sluggard who, looking upon work as slavery, frees himself from its irksome rounds by giving up his job, faces a worse form of bondage in want or destitution. In many a case the attainment of an objective which appeals strongly to the restive sense savors of jumping from the frying-pan into the fire. Even though one were care-free while living from a material standpoint, one's title to existence would be mortgaged to a relentless creditor who is sure, sooner or later, to foreclose the claim. "Every one that committeth sin [error, missing the mark] is the bondservant of sin."

The common notion of freedom, resting as it does on a material basis, necessarily leads to negative and contradictory issues. Economic and political measures conceived in the interest of freedom on merely opportunist lines lack the Principle of stability. Makeshift movements fathered by worldly expediency are not apt to harmonize with the spiritual order of eternity. A questionable scheme that promises to improve human conditions may seem to work well until some unforeseen factor enters and disarranges the schedule. Material sense, groping its way in the dark, frequently miscalculates the results to which its well-intentioned efforts eventually lead.

Confusion and discord are the ultimate outcome of the mistaken supposition that freedom is a divinely bestowed prerogative which the individual is privileged to exercise in his own right. From the self-centered standpoint of the human mind, freedom means the ability to do as one pleases. For many reasons, however, that ideal is impractical. In the first place, physical limitations and natural disabilities prevent its consistent realization. Mortal man is held up at every turn by asserted natural laws, or material modes, which hinder him from carrying out his cherished desires. The range of his activities is curtailed by circumstances and conditions. While human ingenuity and resourcefulness are ever surmounting limitations on the material plane, the horizon-line of experience at each stage sets a boundary to possible exploits. Human freedom is subject at all times to the belief of limitation in mechanical directions.

Again, the individual who claims the right to do as he pleases, to be a law unto himself, finds that others are actuated by the same motive. Hence there is a perpetual clash of interests on the human plane, with resultant confusion and strife. In practice there is no such thing as the theory of personal freedom would imply. Where people in given groups are like-minded, the same situation obtains between the groups. Each group that claims the right to carry out its schemes independent of the desires and plans of other bodies, encounters opposition.

So experience teaches men to sacrifice something of their personal and their collective sense of freedom by entering into mutual agreements or pacts with their fellows, thereby demonstrating another ideal of freedom — peace, or freedom from strife. Thus the surrender, in some degree, of personal liberty conduces to a greater measure of freedom on the whole; for it tends to eliminate friction, which is a deterrent to freedom. Cooperation forms the basis of freedom in family, communal, state, and international affairs.

Whether conceived on a small or a large scale, cooperative schemes require mutual understanding between the parties concerned. So, in political units there are evolved systematically drawn codes or laws for the government of regularly constituted bodies. The further this practice of consolidating interests is carried, the more the individual is obliged to part with his claim to be a law unto himself; the whole trend draws him increasingly out of his exclusive self. When the authority of the law, purporting to represent the will of the people in the aggregate, reaches the point where he feels that he is being unduly deprived of his rights, he protests, either in his own capacity or in association with others. Political opposition carried beyond the limit of orderly measures develops into active rebellion, civil war, or anarchy.

The same thing occurs when nations, failing to settle their difficulties amicably, resort to arms. In all these cases, involving individuals or groups of varying magnitudes, the source of strife is traceable to a material conception of the nature of freedom. So long as this misunderstanding persists, it is impossible to avoid friction and conflict in human affairs. Cooperation, mutual concession, and diplomacy may serve to relieve the strain at critical points; but they are powerless to remove the root of the difficulty which is at the bottom of the whole human problem in both its major and its minor aspects.

Just so long as mortals adhere to their characteristic outlook on the question of living, the procuring cause of the trouble will remain untouched; and the modicum of harmony that can be achieved must depend largely on palliative and ameliorating measures designed to check excessive and violent eruptions. Human society developed on a material basis is at best a makeshift arrangement in which the claims of the individual and the rights of the public are bound to conflict. Under such circumstances, the matter of adjusting disagreements by either amicable or forcible means is sure to present serious problems.

So long as men live under Caesar's reign, so long as they acknowledge a material standard of living, they cannot avoid the necessity of paying tribute to Caesar, either voluntarily or involuntarily. To invoke the protection of the constituted agencies of law and order, and at the same time to claim the right to flout legal obligations, is illogical and inconsistent. An individual who is willing to benefit by the protection and opportunities afforded by the orderly functioning of the machinery of government thereby obligates himself to forego a measure of personal liberty, by virtue of his relation to the system under which he fares.

Human ideas of justice accord to society, through the organized agencies of government, the right to decree such measures as it deems necessary to protect the best interests of the people at large, as against exclusive individual rights and privileges. A representative form of government is designed to allow the individual the maximum amount of freedom consistent with the best interests of society in the aggregate. That society is entitled to protect itself against encroachments of individual initiative that menace its welfare, is generally conceded. Consequently, it legislates against public nuisances, private aggression, and interference with orderly functioning in the body politic.

The theory of democracy recognizes the principle of self-rule; "government of the people, by the people, for the people." In practice, however, this ideal can be carried out only in a relative degree, owing to human shortcomings. The disposition of certain persons to obtain unfair advantage, to gain ends by arbitrary methods or deceitful practices, to shirk responsibility, — these tendencies weaken the social and political structure, and in time lead to its dissolution. In the tentative order of human society, even at its best, serious issues are certain to arise.

From time immemorial, sober, law-abiding members of society have been subjected to untold annoyance, distress, and danger as a result of overindulgence in alcoholic beverages by inconsiderate or undisciplined elements. As the social conscience began to assert itself with greater vigor during the last century, the demand for an abatement of this nuisance increased until the issue between morality and lawlessness, decency and licentiousness, finally came to a head in the United States; and outraged public sentiment rose in a wave of righteous indignation and wiped out the legal status of the liquor traffic.

This drastic step was taken after unceasing efforts to regulate and reform the business had met with derision and contempt at the hands of interests entrenched by powerful political combinations. This summary method of dealing with the issue was commensurate with the provocation given by a defiant and unscrupulous foe of public morals and social welfare. In view of the past record, no other logical step could have been taken to save a scandalous situation. The influence of alcohol has proven in experience to be the most demoralizing, degrading factor in human economy; an agency indissolubly linked, by natural affinity, with the worst phases of corruption, prostitution, violence, crime, poverty, insanity, and vice of every sort.

Could irony find a more fitting subject than the partnership between a government based on constructive, progressive ideals and this arch-enemy of all that is best and most uplifting in human experience! On what ground can an institution that defies every ordinary instinct of decency, orderliness, and humanity be countenanced morally or protected legally? Is it not an anomalous thing to harbor or condone such a working-agreement in a civilization that bans, with scarcely a protest, the promiscuous sale of high explosives, deadly poisons, obscene literature, and other dangerous articles?

Faced with an appalling array of indictments, what plea can alcohol make in its own behalf? Nothing more than an excuse for the selfish indulgence of a treacherous, tyrannical appetite, affording at best but an artificial stimulus, a sensuous thrill, an exhilarating spell. With what show of consistency can loyal citizens who view with alarm the mutterings of political anarchy lend their aid, openly or tacitly, to the most prolific cause of physical, mental, and moral anarchy?

Industrial leaders have spoken in no uncertain tones regarding the effect of drink in impairing working efficiency; and statisticians have confirmed their verdict. The advent of the automobile and the airplane has precipitated a new issue, in the matter of drunken driving. There is also another consideration of the utmost importance, — the corrupting influence of the liquor interests in their relation to political and social standards. It should hardly be expected that a business which thrives on stimulating the indulgence of a treacherous, enslaving appetite would be conducted with meticulous regard for ethical distinctions. In its organized capacity, the traffic was formerly able to control legislation and, through its ramifying agencies and diversified activities, obtain a throttle-hold on numberless poverty-stricken victims, whose families, lives, and property were at the mercy of the depredators.

In league with the worst elements of society, promoting vice, destitution, and every conceivable form of evil, this institution constituted a veritable cancer eating into the vitals of the body politic. Any proposal to "reform" the traffic and establish it on a reputable basis savors of irony, to say the least. A traffic that has brazenly defied and trampled on every instinct of decency has little excuse, at this late date, for protesting or begging for a new lease of life.

The emissaries of Bacchus seek, by every available means, to create an atmosphere favorable to the prosecution of their designs; — by propaganda on the screen, on the air, in the press, through sensational literature, the drama, pictorial art, and every possible avenue of approach to the heart of the populace. The effrontery of this insidious type of appeal should rob such overtures of the desired effect. The studied conspiracy to debauch public opinion with respect to an issue of the profoundest moral significance, by means of gibes, jeers, and sneers against law and order amounts, in effect, to a veiled form of treason.

What strange magic enables this moral outlaw and traducer of men, staggering under an ever-accumulating load of bloodguiltiness, to challenge and flout the best instincts and sentiments in a world groaning to be delivered from bondage to one of the most cruel taskmasters? The magic proceeds from no other source than a subtle spell of apathy that soothes the slumbering conscience of mankind into regarding the alcoholic blight as a necessary evil, if not, indeed, a blessing. Were the conscience of a well-intending, respectable class of citizens aroused from this reverie, or moral lapse, and brought squarely to face the stock assertion that the law pertaining to this type of criminality cannot be enforced as well as other enactments in the same category, the brakes that retard progress in this direction would be released.

Here lies the grave responsibility that rests on the shoulders of a great army of half-hearted, timorous private citizens who, by resolutely and loyally affirming their allegiance to a righteous cause, have it in their power to settle the question beyond controversy. It is the spirit of laxity and indifference that enables evil to stalk in high places and hold up its head unabashed. Temporizing with the problem of alcoholism is fraught with dangers more acute than in the case of most issues.

The appetite for drink tends, in a majority of instances, to increase with its indulgence. Although well-disciplined natures may succeed in confining their tastes to milder forms of the beverage, a vast number lack that capacity. The plea for legalizing the sale of milder forms is an entering wedge which, from the nature of the case, would open the way for the return of former conditions in response to more persistent clamorings. Until the public conscience is roused to the point of demanding the extermination of the traffic, root and branch, the pendulum of a vacillating sense will continue to swing to and fro between orderliness and anarchy.

A social order attempting to function on the platform of personal liberty comes to grief in a free-for-all state of anarchy. Civilization based on law and order aims to shield mankind from such a fate; and this end cannot be achieved without restricting personal liberty in a considerable degree. Reputable citizens are willing to sacrifice something of personal considerations for the sake of the greater gain to society. Few individuals oppose the principle of taxation, compulsory education, sanitary regulation, protection against fraud, crime, despoliation of natural resources, importation of infected agricultural products, and a thousand other measures that interfere with personal liberty.

On what ground, then, can the right of society to deal in equally drastic fashion with the worst foe of civilized institutions be denied? It will readily be conceded that a person who insists on his right to smoke amidst explosives, trespasses on the rights of society and is subject to restraint. In a wider sense, those who seek to nullify the regulations which society has been compelled to establish for its protection against the alcoholic evil are sowing seeds of anarchy and undermining the structure of popular government.

Under such circumstances, defying the law, conniving at its violation, and working in league with outlaws who thrive on the patronage of professedly respectable citizens, becomes more than an ordinary misdemeanor. Is personal liberty that employs such methods for its vindication more sacred than the liberty of society? In their desperate efforts to reestablish the traffic, liquor advocates have recourse to various subterfuges — such as local option, or legalizing the sale of milder alcoholic beverages; trusting that the wedge, once inserted, may be driven deeper, until the former status shall again prevail. It is, however, begging the question to put forward such overtures. Either the traffic is an evil, or it is not. If the former, why legalize it even in restricted localities, where its effects will be felt also by inhabitants of the surrounding territory? And if the latter, why confine it to certain sections?

Should not the fact that alcohol lends itself to widespread abuse under existing conditions, and is sure to bring disastrous consequences to multitudes of the less self-reliant class, be a sufficient reason for condemning and outlawing the business? A selfish world still echoes Cain's retort, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Paul, however, viewing the human problem through other eyes, declared: "If meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore." Should not the moral obligation that a self-respecting citizen owes his fellows be a sufficient incentive to induce him to forego the gratification of a personal taste and lend the weight of his influence to the cause of redeeming his less fortunate brothers from the curse of a destroying appetite?

Even, however, were all loyal citizens willing to sacrifice their personal pleasure in this matter for the sake of the greater gain to humanity, there would still remain the pertinent question, Why the indulgence, anyway? Why cultivate and perpetuate an artificial craving which affords at best but a minimum of good to offset a maximum of evil? "Use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh" exclaimed Paul.

The stock argument that the traffic to-day is justifiable because Jesus condoned the use of wine on occasions, derives its seeming support from a superficial line of reasoning. Were all liquor advocates who cite the Master's attitude as a precedent as ready to follow out his ethical and spiritual precepts in their broad, general implications, Christianity would receive a new impetus.

In the first place, physical and economic conditions in Palestine at that period were in no way comparable to those which obtain in our civilization. Pure drinking-water was at a premium in many places. People often journeyed long distances to reach such a source of supply as was afforded by Jacob's well. Uncontaminated water-courses in that mountainous country were difficult of access to a considerable portion of the populace which dwelt in isolated centers; and artificial means of supply were not developed as they are among us to-day.

On the other hand, fruitful vineyards were capable of producing an abundance of wine, which could be stored in skin-bottles ill-adapted to preserve water in a fresh and palatable state. However great may have been the excesses that resulted from the use of wine under those primitive conditions, drunkenness did not constitute the public hazard that it does in this mechanically developed age. The latter consideration has brought the matter to a head and forced a definite issue on economic and humanitarian as well as purely moral grounds — as many another delayed issue has been precipitated by circumstances when the time was ripe.

Wisdom is sometimes long-suffering. It does not force issues prematurely on an unprepared world. The question, then, is not what Jesus' attitude was towards the situation as he found it in his day, but what his attitude would be under the present aggravated conditions. Does any one really believe that if he were here to-day he would lend his support to an institution whose existence in any form is a social menace and a challenge to sobriety and clean living, in order that an asserted claim of personal liberty might be vindicated?

We have gone thus at length into the consideration of this question not because a policy of suppression by material means or on material grounds (if indeed that were altogether possible) would wholly dispose of the fundamental issue or usher in an earthly millennium, — the illusive dream that ever haunts the vision of idealists and reformers, —

but because the liquor traffic has not a foot on which to stand in reason, morality, or common decency. Here is a practical issue that demands the highest order of patriotism for its settlement. Is not the repetition of patriotic shibboleths by those who place appetite above the public welfare a breach of consistency?

If spiritual freedom is the ultimate goal of human endeavor, the slave to habits of indulgence in any direction suffers a severe handicap. The tobacco habit, which to some may seem innocuous enough as a casual indulgence, has developed gigantic proportions in its sway over mankind and assumed tyrannical aspects which make for enslavement rather than for emancipation.

Order is cited as heaven's first law. Spiritual order and harmony are manifestations of the Principle of being, God; disorder and discord have no principle and no real existence. Human experience tends either spiritward or matterward; it exemplifies either Principle or the negation of Principle; it is headed either towards reality, harmony, spirituality, life, or towards unreality, discord, materiality, death. Jesus contrasted these two tendencies in his declaration to the material-minded Pharisees: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above." Dissipation of every sort is devoid of Principle, it is negative, self-destroying. This applies to the wanton indulgence of intellectual and emotional impulses as well as to the pampering of physical and moral weaknesses. Evidences are all too common of the deleterious effects of such negative mental tendencies as undue excitability, irritability, anger, nervousness, anxiety, morbidness, lustfulness, and the like, which characterize the carnal mind. When the driver gives the horses too much rein, they frequently run wild, with disastrous consequences. An emotional spree may be as demoralizing as a drunken carousal.

Hysteria and its perpetuation to greater lengths in insanity denote a false sense of emotional freedom, uncontrolled mental dissipation. Innocent indulgence in loosely defined, non-constructive habits of thinking and feeling promotes negative results and undermines the morale of living. Anything that weakens one's hold on Principle is dissipating. A nominally independent person who allows himself to be bound by invisible chains is not free. The proverbial sickly saint is no longer the ideal of spiritual manhood. The negative condition of disease, disability, passive resignation, death, evidences the lack of a realizing sense of the perfect Principle of Man. A victim of disease is as surely one "whom Satan hath bound" as is a sinner in the ordinarily accepted sense.

Paul reprimanded the Corinthian church because many of its adherents were "weak and sickly." The early Christians recognized their obligation to prove the Principle of Man in physical as well as moral respects. Yet, how many of their successors fail to acknowledge this factor as a token of spiritual living! Christendom has almost overlooked the scientific significance of the much abused passage: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Men have been slow to admit that these words, so frequently quoted in a merely figurative sense, are quite as literal a statement of fact as is a mathemetical or a chemical formula.

What an inspiration to endeavor in overcoming materiality and winning spiritual freedom is the record of Paul's exploits in the book of The Acts! Unimposing as far as physique was concerned, but princely in his sublime determination to win his way to eternal life through emancipation from fleshly constraints, he surmounted obstacles that would have staggered a less heroic character. No trained athlete ever entered a race with keener zest than he exhibited in contending for the spiritual trophy that beckoned him on. What a tone of assurance there is in his straightforward declaration: "One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!"

The privilege of Roman citizenship was regarded as an inestimable boon by persons of alien birth who were fortunate enough to be able to acquire it, often at a great sacrifice. Boastful of his freedom in that respect, the captain of the Roman guard at Jerusalem exclaimed, "With a great sum obtained I this citizenship." Paul, however, freeborn Roman citizen though he was, gloried rather in being a "prisoner of Christ Jesus." Having experienced a taste of real freedom, "the liberty of the glory of the children of God," he lightly esteemed, by comparison, the mock-freedom which is powerless to deliver mortals from a worse bondage than that of prison walls and iron shackles.

The world has been overrun with panaceas and idealistic schemes for realizing freedom — political, economic, social, and what not; and still the exponents of each new school or cult pin their faith as confidently as ever to the promises it offers of emancipating the world. Eager groups engage in spreading propaganda and doing missionary work in behalf of their particular doctrines or proposals. Many of these enterprises merely scratch the surface of the human problem, others turn a furrow here or there; but how few reach beneath the surface to bed-rock! How repeatedly has the world been reformed and transformed (in theory) by optimistic natures!

Still, "hope springs eternal." The one factor that is generally overlooked by such enthusiasts is the selfish instinct of the human mind. An architect may plan a wonderful edifice, artistically designed and conveniently arranged; but when it comes to construction, if he has nothing better than poor field-stone with which to build, his dream is likely to end in disappointed expectations. Since mortal man, the unit of society, is far from being free, harried as he is by conflicting emotions and shifting purposes, he offers poor material from which to build a free order of society. The ancient adage, "Vox populi, vox Dei" applied very well when the ideal of God was but a magnified image of the mortal type; but the discrepancy becomes apparent as more intelligent views of Deity come to light.

The seed grows into a thrifty plant because of a coordinating force commonly known as the vital principle. Each component element obeys the rule of spontaneous activity in assuming its proper place and function in the developing organism. What would occur, however, were certain cells, or groups of cells, to contend with others for a particular assignment or adjustment more to their liking in the biological scheme? Yet that is just what takes place in the realm of human affairs. Millions of self-centered mortals, struggling for preference, actuated by selfish motives, devoted to material ends, entertaining diverse ideals, dream of world-unity, "peace on earth." While expediency and self-interest lead to the formation of temporary alliances and the adoption of working-agreements among nations, parasitic forces within eat into the vitals of the body politic.

Even among the most enlightened, progressive peoples crime, graft, and self-seeking fasten their hold on governmental and social institutions. Discovery and invention, while contributing enormously to the comfort and convenience of civilized races, have correspondingly increased the hazard of living. They have been responsible, too, for standards which, although enabling the rank and file of persons to enjoy greater independence in material directions, tend to make conformity to fixed modes of procedure more or less of a necessity. Paradoxical as it might seem, as men are rendered more independent by the multiplication of conveniences and labor-saving devices which are entering more and more into the economy of living, they are, by that very token, bonding themselves to a system which becomes increasingly intricate and exacting at every stage.

The modern spirit of independence, originally developed as a reaction against political and ecclesiastical tyranny, but accentuated later by unprecedented mechanical developments, has got beyond the control of organized agencies and gone off on a tangent in lawless and reckless abandon. Instead of emancipating humankind, this misconceived, spurious freedom leads into bondage of a more dangerous type. Conventional restraints and a more or less habitual respect for authority, which have served as a sort of cement to hold society together, are fast disappearing and leaving little besides the element of self-interest to insure solidarity. Even the fear of future punishment, which was the impelling motive in the old theology, no longer influences men to an appreciable extent. The passing of these cohesive factors, arbitrary and artificial though they were, leaves the body politic largely unprotected from ravaging forces.

Lawlessness is a disease. It is the *spirit* of lawlessness, spreading like an epidemic among the people, and not the technical violation of specific legal requirements, that is most significant in its relation to the state of society. If drinking has increased more recently in certain circles, it is due more to the wave of independence and irresponsibility fostered by a bloody war, than to stringent legal enactments. "Pep" is the catch-word of the hour, and alcohol is sought as a means of adding fuel to the fire which hectic conditions in the modern economic and social world have fanned into a flame. "Crime-waves" are only aggravated symptoms of a latent general condition in the public mind which flares up when circumstances favor. Likewise, the warlike spirit, even when unexpressed, furnishes occasion for outbreaks of the disease in moments of stress. The gentle, docile tiger suddenly changes to the ferocious beast at the smell of blood. There can be no sure guaranty of peace, either among individuals or in the world at large, while the instinct which gives rise to hostile demonstrations lurks in the human mind.

In a democracy, the citizenry is nominally and theoretically free, in that the people have it in their power to decree their own methods and policies of government administration; but how far is this the case in actual practice? So complex has the machinery of the law become, that the threads of justice are often hopelessly entangled and lost in technical processes; the instrument is master of those whom it was designed to serve. Invisible, unauthorized factors frequently prove more influential and powerful than regularly constituted, official agencies. Due to the apathetic state of the public conscience, a small minority of unscrupulous adventurers may bring about a reign of terror which has the effect of discouraging or interdicting court procedure and drastic enforcement of measures designed to check criminal tendencies.

Organized corruption protects itself by threatening law-abiding citizens and executives who dare oppose its operations. A single desperado can sometimes keep a whole community on the defensive. Where criminals, or more genteel enemies of society, are banded together, working by intrigue and underground methods, they frequently succeed, by clever devices, in laying a network of plots that hoodwinks a confiding public. Powerful combinations control legislation in their own selfish interest through the medium of venal public servants, and defy justice by subsidizing able legal talent to raise a smoke-screen of technicalities behind which they may escape. The intricate and involved status of judicial processes enables offenders more easily to circumvent the ends of justice.

Evidences of malfeasance in office occasionally leak out and cause a sensation for the time being; then the flare-up subsides, and public opinion settles back to its wonted level while the despoilers continue to ply their trade unmolested. So mesmerized is the mass-mind that a vast number of intelligent people, alert in other respects, little realize to what an extent their opinions and judgments are controlled by paid publicity experts and subsidized mediums for disseminating news.

The most flagrant examples of corruption are the inevitable outcome of a parasitic sense which is abroad in all walks of life, a disposition to profit by others' efforts and fare at their expense. This propensity, exhibited even in the inorganic realm, keeps pace with the development of organic forms all the way up the scale. The enormous expansion of activities at the present stage of human progress and the complexity of social processes give unprecedented opportunity for the exploitation of this reactionary tendency in systematic ways. It is one of the delusions of material sense that one's freedom can be enhanced by depriving others of their freedom.

Materiality implies limitation; and on that basis a selfish instinct impels mortals to seek the enlargement of their own freedom by attempting to rob others of a similar right. The parasitic tendency is a legitimate, though degenerate, child of the predatory instinct that induces more powerful animals to feed on weaker ones. The attempt to acquire wealth and the freedom it is supposd to confer, by selfishly exploiting others' talents, is but an adaptation of the same motive to enlarged and developed opportunities.

Parasitism in human economy is a miasma that infects political, industrial, and religious bodies, and weakens the morale of society in general. It takes the form of graft, paternalism, political favoritism, and the disposition to obtain advantage in numberless ways. Its contagion pollutes the mental and moral atmosphere, and opens the door to loose practices. The functioning of a democratic form of government is just as good (or bad) as the citizens decree; for the representatives of the people reflect, by and large, the ideals and sentiments of their constituents. Where corruption is prevalent, it reveals a low reading in the barometer of ethical standards. While it springs from the mistaken belief that an individual can promote his own freedom by infringing the rights of others, the parasitic tendency actually weakens those who sponsor it and those who consent to it.

The let-down in the public conscience, which at least tolerates a growing spirit of mental and moral anarchy, provides a background for the exploitation of criminal propensities. Under these circumstances, the arm of the law is becoming less and less able to cope with the existing situation. Governmental machinery designed to function in a simpler state of society proves inadequate where new factors are appearing in rapid succession and the pace is accelerating in geometrical ratio. The arts and sciences, with their flourishing protégé, inventive genius, are indirectly aiding loose, unbridled tendencies by providing means of aggressive and defensive campaigning and affording opportunity of escape for the criminally inclined. Taking into account the social status and the drift of public opinion these things augur ill for the stability of the old order.

On the plane of relative, finite conceptions that characterize human experience, the ideal of free institutions can be realized only to a limited extent. Duties, privileges, and rights are variable factors that often seem to conflict. Under such a régime, freedom is contingent on circumstances. A thing that is right at one time and under certain conditions may be wrong under other conditions. As a general proposition, the rights of communities are self-evidently entitled to take precedence over merely individual rights; and the rights of mankind at large are, in a general sense, above those of particular nations. There are, however, factors which complicate the situation in its technical aspects; and the course which is nearest right in any given case depends largely on the spirit in which it is undertaken — whether for merely selfish ends, or for the well-being of humanity in the broad and ultimate sense.

Under popular government, freedom of speech and freedom of the press are, strictly speaking, privileges rather than inherent rights. For example, expression of opinion on certain questions which would be justifiable under ordinary circumstances might arouse a mob to deeds of violence and destruction. No one can be prevented from thinking as he pleases, but translating thought into speech and action involves other considerations; collective rights enter the equation, and the will of the majority prevails.

Interstate commerce, aeronautics, radio, the liquor question, and numerous other factors have contributed to bring the issue of states' rights to the fore more prominently than ever. Moreover, the injection of these and other broadening issues into the international situation has created new complications. Material developments have not only connected isolated communities, but they have eliminated geographical barriers and brought separate nations into closer relations. A policy of isolation, once feasible, is no longer possible for any people. International agreements must constantly be revised and brought up to date on broader lines. The rights and privileges of politically independent nations give rise to many knotty problems. Extreme tariff policies invite reprisals and threaten boycotts. The logic of the present trend of things is steadily forcing nations to the point of ordering their diplomatic negotiations on the basis of a community of interests; as private commercial enterprises are combining for self-protection.

The question of religious freedom, while seemingly simple on the surface, presents some perplexing problems. There can be no stricture on liberty of thought in religious matters; but when denominational beliefs are expressed through the church as an organized institution having contacts with various social activities, the issue between civil and ecclesiastical rights comes to the front. If the liberty of various denominations to worship according to their own convictions were all that was at stake, the solution would be easy; but where their activities extend to the realm of civil and political affairs, conflicting claims of belief make satisfactory adjustments difficult.

The United States of America has been styled the land of the free. Little did the early settlers who came to its shores seeking asylum from religious persecution dream of future developments. Its national history presents this country as the world's experimental station, founded and maintained to work out the ideal of liberty. Great opportunities impose great responsibilities. The complexion of things, within the country and without, has changed during the intervening period more rapidly and radically than in any other epoch in the world's history. Altered conditions have brought new outlooks, new problems, new obligations.

The limited ideals and methods of the past no longer suffice. Has the country already fulfilled its mission, or is it destined to lead on in the future towards more exalted standards of freedom? If the latter, what must be its practical attitude towards concrete problems that face it to-day in the rapidly moving order of material expansion? Will it purge itself of political corruption, graft, moneymadness, or will it follow in the wake of the great nations of antiquity that have made their contribution to the composite ideal of civilization and declined? Will it use the unparalleled opportunities it enjoys, by virtue of its geographical location and boundless resources, to exploit ever-mounting material ambitions, or will it regard those opportunities in the light of a sacred trust committed to it in the interest of world-betterment? The answer to these questions depends on the degree in which the national conscience is aroused to purge the body politic of unsavory conditions within, and to face the world-situation from an international point of view.

Obedience is a spiritual quality. The material negation of obedience appears in the impulse of disobedience, lawlessness. To mortal man, whose conception of law is material, freedom is a condition that depends on external factors. To avoid burning one's fingers, one must keep them out of the fire. Mortal man's freedom from physical suffering is contingent on his obedience to what he conceives to be laws of nature. Ascending a step higher, the same thing occurs on the moral plane. An upright person suffers from violating moral law; his freedom in this respect depends on his obedience to ethical obligations. One whose moral sense is dormant experiences less acute anguish from trampling on the rights of his fellows than does a morally sensitive nature. As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he."

The consciousness that is waking to perceive spiritual truth suffers keener torture from deliberately disobeying the heavenly voice than does the unaroused sense. The more fully aware one becomes that true freedom is spiritual, the more one realizes that it depends on obedience to the law of God; in other words, on the degree in which one's course conforms to Principle. "With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." This ringing proclamation of Paul's strikes the keynote of freedom on the basis of God's government of Man.

The circling worlds in space are free in the sense that their orbits conform to the rule of rhythm and harmony among the spheres. Likewise spiritual Man is free in a higher sense, since his activities obey the order and harmony of being. In proportion as individuals succeed in realizing this status, the groundwork of the kingdom of heaven among men is laid. Without this prerequisite condition, social harmony is at best a tentative makeshift or temporary experiment.

In the present era, freedom is a term to conjure with. The spirit of independence is in the air, it permeates the ideals and wings the hopes of mortals of all races and ranks. To be "old-fashioned" is regarded is a stigma. Novel, up to date ideas prevail in fashions, business methods, economic processes, and all other departments of human activity. The craze for new things just because they are new is contagious. The modernistic trend dominates art, literature, dress, ways of living and thinking. Jazz is simply a musical interpretation of the spirit of the times, a mirror of popular thought and emotion.

Nor are these things altogether evil, symptoms of degeneracy, as some would have us believe. They signalize the release of thought from cramping conventions. They are instinct with a sense of vigor and spontaneity on a lower plane; but like an unmagnetized compass-needle, they do not at present point steadily to a definite goal. They follow an erratic course, like a bird loosed from long confinement, trying its wings and rejoicing in the exhilarating atmosphere of the upper regions. The adventuresome spirit, however, is being turned to good account in the development of aeronautics and other useful pursuits. Untrammeled by tradition, the released thought is setting out to explore new fields, in new ways, with new intent, for new kinds of achievement.

Buoyant with fresh inspiration, standing at the threshold of boundless realms never before dreamed of, the new romanticism asserts its independence of conservative restraints and gives vent to its exuberance in extravagant expressions, often bordering on delirium. In the process of snapping artificial cords that fettered free development, it has incidentally done violence to customs and institutions which in the past have been the mainstay of human interests.

When the pendulum swings back from extreme conservatism, it goes as far beyond the point of equilibrium in the opposite direction. The whole tendency of the present movement betokens a spirit of awakening. While the surface indications are largely material, those symptoms represent the ground-swell of human emotionalism responding to a spiritual urge which it neither comprehends nor detects. A new element is being injected into the situation, which alters the complexion of affairs in every direction and precipitates unforeseen contingencies and problems.

Something has given way in the taut lines that held experience within conventional bounds. The fences of dogmatic interpretation, which confined thought within restricted areas, are down; and the first impulse of the released sense is to run wild. Just how far it will steady itself after these excesses, remains to be seen. The thrill of sensuous excitement is a material mimicry of spiritual ecstasy. The blazing glare of the bright lights in a metropolitan plaisance is a mock substitute for the illuminating radiance of spiritual truth. And so on, throughout the list of worldly illusions.

The suicidal madness that incites swarms of sporting moths to fly into the fire, lures mortals to destruction in the consuming flames of mental and moral intoxication. The mesmeric spell that seizes upon masses, engulfs innocent victims along with unscrupulous adventurers. In the whirlwind drama of latter-day civilization, suggestion plays the leading rôle—it is the motive factor that keeps the merry-go-round of lurid attractions moving. It is the most subtle means of enslavement, because its character and modes are so little understood and suspected. Innocent natures are induced to act, without realizing why, in ways contrary to their best judgment and inclinations. The uninstructed, undisciplined thought is at the mercy of unseen agencies operating, either ignorantly or designedly, for negative, destructive ends. Little do most persons realize to what an extent their choices and actions are determined by this unseen factor. As with the spider's victims, the silken web is woven so imperceptibly that the process is not detected in its early stages.

The suggestion that material accumulations conduce to freedom makes mortals slaves to the pursuit of wealth. No form of servitude is more inexorable than that engendered by habit, no kind of bondage, harder to break away from. The average man is so mastered by the habit of money-getting that he not only acquires all that he can to satisfy his ever-mounting ambitions, but he keeps on in the game of pursuing empty symbols of wealth after his most extravagant wants are provided for,—he becomes a slave to the process itself. Inordinate craving expands by its own exercise. An acquisitive nature, instead of possessing wealth, comes to be possessed by it.

Then, there are slaves of traditionalism, pride, prejudice, intolerance, and numerous other traits which spring from a material source, "from beneath." Mortals try in every way to escape the consequences of their mistaken view of living without changing about and taking steps to eliminate the cause of their suffering. "If . . . the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

The conception of man as a creature of flesh and blood, endowed in part with an animal nature, leads to the subordination of the spiritual to the material in human economy. So long as "man that is born of a woman" is held before the gaze as Man made "in the image of God," carnal propensities will appear to flourish and trample on the finest hopes and aspirations of mankind. What picture is sadder than the wanton, ruthless sacrifice of ideal achievements to the unbridled impetuosity of sordid impulse! So long as the model of man as a material-spiritual creature is accepted as authentic, so long as a divinely ordained partnership between the spiritual and the material is admitted, things will seem to go amiss; and the picture of hordes of mortal creatures, born to suffer and die, doomed to struggle against unequal odds, tormented by sensual desires and appetites clamoring for satisfaction at the expense of reason, right, and harmony,—this doleful spectacle will continue to mock the best-calculated reform efforts. Is it a part of the divine scheme that a lifetime of wretchedness and degradation should be contingent on the momentary indulgence of inordinate passion? Has the picture projected on the screen as *man* conceived in this mortal fashion anything to do with real being? Until this false substitute for the real is replaced by the true image, the problem of achieving freedom will seem to advance only to recede again.

The earth-man, formed "of the dust of the ground," is linked with material processes, and shares characteristics of the lesser animal forms to which he is allied. This fake man, "of the earth, earthy," real only to deluded sense ("the first man Adam," according to Paul's designation), is a travesty of spiritual Man, who "is of heaven." Mortals bear "the image of the earthy" because the model after which they pattern is fashioned by ignorance and false belief. As they come, through spiritual enlightenment and understanding, to recognize the true model, it begins to show forth in concrete aspects. Mortal man, so-called, is not free; nor, from the nature of the case, can he ever be so. He is a "bondservant" born of the "handmaid," as Paul phrases it in allegorical terms in his letter to the Galatians.

The man of the world prides himself on being practical, not easily duped by fictitious claims. What greater folly, however, could possess any individual than the disposition to pin his immortal hopes to a deceptive, fleeting show of existence without foundation in truth and reality! Paul gave the recipe for the attainment of true freedom in his letter to the church at Rome. Said he: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death."

CHAPTER V.

CIVILIZATION.

Civilization is an outgrowth of the social instinct systematically developed. This instinct is exhibited in a rudimentary way among certain gregarious species of insects. Many kinds of bees and ants enjoy an organized communal existence approximating, in limited ways, the form of human civilization. The elaboration of detail in the latter case is molded and modified by physical considerations and the growth of esthetic and ethical conceptions.

Like everything else in nature, the human species passes through various stages of unfoldment. The savage accepts conditions in general pretty much as he finds them, utilizing means already at hand to satisfy his meager requirements. So he continues from generation to generation without much change until some new turn of experience enlarges his mental outlook and shows him the possibility and desirability of extending the scope of his activities. Then he begins to replace primitive devices and rude implements, which had sufficed to provide him with food and shelter, with more elaborate and ingeniously contrived equipment capable of ministering to varied and refined tastes.

As living conditions improve, men's ambitions and aspirations soar to higher levels. They become not merely self-conscious, but socially conscious.

The advance from simpler forms of communal life to more complex relationships prepares the way for a higher mental experience in the pursuit of the arts and sciences. Enlargement of the intellectual horizon opens a new field in which broader and deeper issues are visioned. All these steps are instrumental in bringing thought in touch with aspects of reality of which the merely sensuous nature has no inkling.

As civilization emerges from barbarism, a new order of things comes to pass. Association for mutual ends, cooperation, organized effort, mark a trend away from individual self-sufficiency towards a state of human interdependence. One progressive step leads to another. As in the case of a growing plant, an inner urge gives rise to successive stages of articulate expression. The factors brought into play in the growth of society represent an amplification and extension of forces operative, in less complicated and diffused ways, in the organic and inorganic realms of nature. Social processes follow out the same rule of development that finite sense recognizes in lower ranges of cosmic evolution. The specific forms of society, the major transformations through which it passes in attaining to maturity, are as definitely predetermined in the nature of things as are the successive stages in the growth of a plant. Arbitrarily conceived human schemes are overruled in the long run by the impelling power of a consistent ideal.

Nothing comes about by chance or accident. Beneath seemingly unrelated surface manifestations, organic forces are making for a unified result, a coherent whole. The family, the state, the church, each represent a specific idea in the unfolding scheme, as finite sense apprehends it. Furthermore, as the plant sprouts from the seed and puts forth shoots, leaves, buds, and flowers in due order, so civilizations pass through similar successive stages in coming to maturity; and having passed the zenith of their development, they decline. Such is the lot of all that appears to be material. The decaying leaves of past civilizations provide soil in which future growths spring up and flourish in their turn. In spite, however, of abundant object-lessons in history, it is characteristic of each generation to assume that the evolutionary process has at length reached a point where the perpetuity of its own social order is assured.

As civilization develops, increasing refinement of popular taste and habits generates artificial ways of living which tend in time to undermine the morale of the social structure. The greatest peoples within historic times have passed through this stage and, in the period of their decline, have fallen a prey to disintegrating forces. Dissipation, in one form or another, weakens the moral fiber so essential to a vigorous condition in the body politic and leaves it at the mercy of foreign elements.

The tremendous advance of material knowledge within modern times and its application to all phases of the human problem render it impossible for any people or nation to maintain an independent position after the manner of the past. Revolutionary departures in methods of communication and transportation have already closed the last gaps between racial groups that formerly existed in comparative isolation, and have forced international understandings and exchange of ideas as well as of commodities. Furthermore, it must be evident to every one by this time that present achievements in a material direction are but an entering wedge which bids fair, at no distant date, to cleave the whole traditional basis of social existence. Rash indeed would it be to set a limit to sensational results in breaking through what was once conceived to be the solid masonry of material barriers to freedom. The vista ahead continually broadens, and we may well pause to ask ourselves what must be the inevitable outcome of the process of disillusionment on which the race is at present only entering.

Due to the arts of civilization, the enlightened sense of mankind is making great strides in changing the complexion of conditions and events in the material realm. Former standards of time and distance are being annihilated by exploits on land and sea and in the air, elemental forces are brought under control and harnessed for useful ends, the secrets of chemical and electrical reservoirs of power are unlocked and their resources turned to practical account, and in a thousand ways mankind is coming to realize its potential supremacy over external environment. Unfortunately, however, conditions of modern living tend to materialize existence. The very boon which the senses crave often blinds mortals to more real values.

The release of mechanical forces for useful purposes has caused the industrial situation to take a new turn. Machinery is superseding man-power, with the result that men are becoming in a way victims of the instrument that was devised to relieve them of drudgery. The individual is, so to speak, a cog in the machinery; and his habit of mind takes on more or less of the mechanical cast of his occupation. To be sure there are compensating features, such as better working conditions, more leisure, and increased wages; but the monotony of a narrowly specialized career tends to stimulate a craving for excessive artificial amusement and excitement.

Spontaneity and the creative instinct are priceless factors in encouraging the development of the higher intuitional and spiritual faculties, and anything that interferes with their exercise deprives mankind of its choicest possession. The main drawback about our present industrial system is that it tends to exalt the process, the method, the mechanism, and to subordinate the personal factor. Mass production restricts human versatility by discouraging individual initiative and resourcefulness. Standardization of products and of production methods makes for standardization of the rank and file of mentalities that contribute to the success of the system.

Consolidation of business and industrial enterprises places the control of affairs in the hands of a few. Under these circumstances, democracy, while remaining an ideal in theory, becomes less and less a fact in practice. The situation as a whole has a tendency to eliminate the independent worker, the individual tradesman, the unhampered creator.

Super-efficiency, so essential to the successful operation of the system, must be maintained at the expense of free individual development. The highly specialized form of organization that insures a maximum of productive capacity, tends to make automatons and robots of operatives whose duties consist in performing routine mechanical functions.

This general situation is one for which no particular persons or bodies of persons are directly responsible. It is a transitional phase of human experience that has come about gradually and unforeseen as a result of unfolding conditions in the scheme of social evolution. It is as much a part of the average man's native environment as is the air he breathes. How long will the tension hold under the accelerating pace of modern civilization without reaching the breaking-point? While there is no limit to the possible speed of mechanical operations, human capacity in this direction has its limitations. Already the attempt to keep up with the speed-demon let loose by ever-mounting discoveries is taking heavy toll in the shape of human victims. One thing is certain, the new order that is on its way will bring new sets of conditions and new means of meeting them.

The most acute phase of the present situation relates to the necessity for constant readjustments in the industrial world. The balance of factors is continually upset as new discoveries and inventions give rise to improved methods of production and distribution, or popular caprice takes freakish turns. The element of constancy no longer governs the details of economic transactions. The surface currents of human enterprise are continually changing and forcing experienced workers to seek new occupations.

Any attempt to visualize the future in detail is likely to fall short of the mark, because we are obliged to interpret the course ahead in terms of past experience. Never was there a period when such criteria were less applicable. For ages civilization has been passing through the leafing-out stage, until it has at length reached the blossoming point. Who, by studying the processes of leaf-production, can tell what type of flower the plant will yield? We may, nevertheless, get some inkling by examining the swelling buds. Certain pronounced tendencies in the social and economic order of the day are leading on towards inevitable results. The period of individual self-sufficiency in economic matters is passing. Combination, concentration, centralization, strike the key-note of the present industrial situation.

Mortals are slow to learn the lesson, so eloquently set forth in nature, that determination of forms is dependent on the operation of vital forces. Consequently, idealists are ever busy devising Utopian schemes to cure all manner of social ills. We have much to learn, in the way of communal organization, from life among certain groups of that humble, but most interesting, order of terrestrial inhabitants—the insects. The activities of some of the more advanced species of ants and bees are characterized by a degree of industry, patience, system, and efficiency that mortals well might emulate. The spirit of devotion to a common cause which pervades the limited rounds of their performances is unique among sentient creatures. We call their guiding-light, *instinct;* but however named, it is a quality that proud humanity, with all its marvelous attainments, has yet to acquire—the instinct which leads to orderly, unselfish cooperation. Rather is the normal unfolding of human society perverted and distorted by motives of sordidness and personal greed. The innate selfishness and cruelty of human nature is manifest in a prevalent lack of consideration for defenseless animal creatures whose sufferings are exploited to gratify artificial human tastes or trifling matters of convenience.

Says a prominent industrialist: "No fair-minded man can insist that modern economic progress is of a certainty leading us toward the Good Life." What appears to have been the most successful start on record of a Christian order of society came about naturally and unpremĕditatedly in the form of a commune at Jerusalem, established by the followers of Jesus shortly after the crucifixion. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. . . . For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of land or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need." True to the ideal as was this local demonstration of the Master's teachings, surrounding conditions were against the spread of the movement on a general scale at that time.

Men bend their energies to secure legal enactments establishing certain specific cure-alls which promise great advantages in solving the human problem. Nature, however, in an extension course in the field of sociology, overrules self-determined efforts to interfere with its stately goings by arbitrarily conceived measures. The ground-swell of comprehensive economic and social movements determines the fate of incidental schemes which aim to remedy specific defects. For that reason, despite the best-intended counter-efforts, the tendency towards centralization of power in government is destined increasingly to prevail over states' rights and local option; not because it fits with a particular theory of political economy, but because it follows from the nature of the problem.

The organization of labor represents the counterpart of the combination of capital. These two factors, formerly hostile to one another in a considerable degree, are gradually drawing nearer the point of acknowledging a community of interests. Profit-sharing enterprises are coming more into vogue, to the mutual advantage of both parties. The principle of cooperation is bound to characterize the advancing order. Already, developments which could hardly have been foreseen are quietly working towards this consummation. Labor and the general public are acquiring a new interest in commercial undertakings by investing in their securities. This growing practice tends to remove a cause of friction which formerly helped to estrange labor and capital.

The present trend of affairs in the industrial world in general cannot continue indefinitely without passing beyond the point of private ownership of natural resources and industries, and arriving at a cooperative basis of some sort. The particular form this development is to take will depend not on any scheme of propaganda, however cleverly and appealingly presented, but on factors inherent in the nature of things. The phenomena of social evolution are as much a feature of the natural realm as is the metamorphosis of a caterpillar into a chrysalis.

The movement towards industrial consolidation, chain store systems, bank mergers, investment trusts, press syndicates, and other steps involving the pooling of interests, could no more have been avoided than can the bursting of springtime buds when the season arrives. The new age will witness a more equitable distribution of the fruits of industry. Ends which an ultra-radical sense seeks to achieve by revolutionary methods are already being furthered by natural, evolutionary processes. If the mills of the gods seem to grind slowly, it is better so than it is to tear the fiber of society to pieces in a violent attempt to force issues on a merely material plane.

The general tendency towards unification of enterprises, which has assumed the lead in the business world, is beginning to compel a lagging religious sense to subordinate sectarian prejudices to a growing need for church unity. In all these things, reactionary personal sentiment is compelled to fall in line with a broader, collective demand. "In union there is strength," the saying goes. Disconsolate individuals may sigh for "the good old days"; but the wheels of progress do not turn backwards. The way out of an unsatisfactory situation lies not in reversal, but in forging ahead to new outlooks and methods of solving the difficulty.

The forces behind economic changes are rapidly altering the whole complexion of society. The traditional ideal of home-life is gradually disappearing before the onrush of new factors. Food production and distribution on a grand scale are slowly eliminating the old-fashioned kitchen. Machine-equipped laundry establishments are supplying the needs formerly served by the family wash-tub. Even the functions of the nursery are being taken over by organized agencies for child-care and training. Individual dwelling-houses are being superseded more and more by apartments with standardized appointments and service. Community kitchens and restaurants cater to the wants of multitudes whose needs were once cared for within their own domestic households. In all these things the personal touch, the stamp of individuality, is disappearing from the social fabric.

Intensive modes of food production, aided by laboratory research, are effecting marked changes in the menu of the average citizen, and otherwise modifying household economy. Modern farming machinery and implements, improved methods of cultivation, chemically produced fertilizers, and means of protection against insect pests, are revolutionizing agriculture. In view of the present ratio of advance, it requires no great stretch of the imagination to visualize a day when the clumsy paraphernalia of the present will be superseded by more direct ways of ministering to gastronomic needs; even as the railroad, the automobile, and the airplane have succeeded the family buggy and the ox-cart as transportation vehicles.

Once under way, the process of providing facilities for releasing mankind from grinding toil and drudgery advances from stage to stage in accelerating ratio. The suggestion of synthetic food-products is sometimes repugnant to fastidious tastes; but forward steps come about naturally and bring their own compensations. When the age of synthetically prepared means of nutrition arrives, it will present attractions and appealing features that do not appear in the prospective picture. Equally foreboding predictions were freely voiced concerning the direful results that would be sure to attend the development of steam-transit, machine-made goods, and other innovations of the past. Regarding the food situation, the change has already set in without a qualm to epicurean tastes.

So rapidly are the wheels of progress speeding up, that the day may not be as far distant as we anticipate when herds of cattle will no longer roam the hillsides, awaiting the abattoir, to provide food and foot-wear for inconsiderate mortals; when dairies, piggeries, and henneries will disappear from the face of the earth, and the left-over relics of a semi-barbarous age will be supplanted by means of subsistence developed on the basis of a more enlightened and humane understanding. Nor need we peer still farther into the future and try to visualize the day when vast areas of grain-fields and market-gardens will no longer supply the food requirements of the population.

Physical and chemical research is making rapid headway in establishing a new basis of human economy. When chemistry reaches the stage where its determinations can be more generally turned to account for constructive, practical ends, a new order will ensue. We are, indeed, already entering the preliminary stage of such development in utilizing, for the manufacture of useful articles, what were formerly regarded as waste agricultural and forestry products.

We now know that the source of mechanical power, and the combination of forces that constitute all materials in the physical realm, lie at hand ready to be adapted and applied directly to the satisfaction of human needs. Beginnings, in an experimental way, looking towards this consummation have already been made. Human ignorance alone prevents the fruition of the most extravagant dreams of the imagination. It has been estimated that the water-power of Niagara represents an energy equivalent to the burning of a ton of coal a second; yet the power latent within the atoms of a pitcher of water equals that of Niagara for a whole day.

Marvelous as have been the changes in the complexion of civilization within the modern period, progress during the last few decades has, in a general way, exceeded that of all previous history; and furthermore, the major portion of this advance has taken place since the beginning of the present century. Revolution has succeeded revolution, and discovery has succeeded discovery, until nothing seems impossible for the future.

The face of the earth is literally being transformed. Even before the advent of the human species, lesser creatures were busy altering the aspect of nature. With the appearance of mortals, however, more radical changes began to be wrought. As civilization emerged from barbarism, a new order of things came about. Habitations of original design sprang up in place of rude huts, and natural resources were adapted to useful and beautiful ends. Cities were built where once the stillness of the forest prevailed and the cries of wild animals were heard. The development of civilization tends to draw the population together in cities. There is, in a sense, truth in the saying that God made the country and man made the city.

The disposition of the rural population to gravitate towards manufacturing and commercial centers follows the rule of economic necessity. Especially is this true at the present time, when improved methods are increasing the ratio of production in agricultural pursuits even beyond that of other enterprises. New kinds of building-material have revolutionized construction, especially in the cities, and bid fair to do so to a far greater extent in the future. Lumber and stone obtained from natural sources are being superseded by metal, concrete, and artificial products which render the erection of higher, more massive structures feasible; and the prospect is that developments at hand will still further accentuate the tendency to broaden base-lines and build to greater heights. Thus we may have cities within cities.

America has made a distinctive contribution to the world's architecture, in the form of the "skyscraper" or towering type of city structure. As a result of this departure, a new feature is added to the landscape, in the picturesque sky-line of the modern metropolis. City-planning and landscape architecture are also contributing to render city and suburbs more attractive.

The matters which we have thus far considered pertain mainly to physical aspects of the situation. Of even greater importance, however, in its bearing on present issues, is the psychological factor. Indeed this factor must, in the final analysis, be held responsible for the unprecedented advance in discovery and invention and all the train of improvements for which they are accountable. Even in the endeavor to acquire material knowledge, "it is the spirit that quickeneth." A quickened intellectual and moral pulse started in motion the mental machinery which resulted in the modern tempo as applied to every phase of the human problem.

We are in the midst of a psychological era; and the story of current developments can be interpreted only in the light of the psychological factor which is the mainspring of latter-day civilization. Conventional criteria of the past no longer serve to gauge present conditions; nor do they give an inkling of the course ahead. Country lanes in the mental realm have given way to main traffic-arteries. Things move apace, without the old restrictions and constraints. The expanding thought of to-day can neither be circumscribed nor confined to prescribed courses by preceptors and censors. An organization or cult that thinks to hold the budding thought in line with traditional or cut and dried policies reckons amiss.

Technical boundaries to thinking may be set up, and rules of conduct may be arbitrarily imposed; but the psychological factor ignores such restraints, even as the aviator asserts his independence of terrestrial barriers. The studied effect of dogmatic pronouncements and reactionary propaganda is largely nullified by activities of the emancipated mental factor. The element of secrecy is becoming less and less possible in diplomacy, commerce, religion, — yes, even in individual thinking. The spirit of the times tends to bring clandestine methods, and the consideration of issues that were once tabooed, out into the open. "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known."

The psychology of mystery is one of the most convenient tools of evil. The involved atmosphere of sex-psychology is charged with the instinct of secrecy, morbid curiosity, and erotic appeal. The glamour of salacious, seductive themes in literature, the drama, the movies, and social life in general, arises largely from the subtle, psychic quality that permeates and envelopes popular thought and imagination and wantonly stimulates sensual desire. Stripped of artificial disguise, the reproductive instinct in human economy loses its magic lure. Mass mesmerism, the psychic spell that takes possession of crowds, offers fertile soil for the exploitation of suggestive subjects by purveyors of the risqué and obscene. Especially is this true under conditions which modern facilities provide for focussing mental pictures on public attention.

Psychology plays an increasing part in merchandising transactions in the business world. The psychological appeal in advertising mediums is at present often distorted by weird, unnatural exploitation of irrelevant features designed to exert a persuasive influence over susceptible minds. The attempt to envelope the presentation of a product in an atmosphere that invites response from an abnormally stimulated taste is a transient phase of publicity campaigning in a period when kaleidoscopic changes succeed one another with striking rapidity.

Economic and social conditions are producing a new type of mortal. The present and prospective development of the arts of civilization tends more and more to concentrate the population in cities and throw the balance of power into the hands of irresponsible elements. It is difficult to forecast accurately the psychological effect which this trend is to have eventually in molding the mental and moral status of the type of man that will dominate the world. Direct, personal appeal is recognized; but vague, impersonal suggestions and arguments which proceed from the mass-mind, or collective sense, are not so readily comprehended and discounted.

Civilization was never in as precarious a position as it is to-day. Nations have at their disposal chemical formulas which, if requisitioned for destructive purposes, are capable of wiping the human species from the face of the earth. War in the past was child's play in comparison with the type of warfare that scientific research has at length made possible. The procuring cause of war at present is economic rivalry. Products of the soil are the mainstay of material prosperity, for they furnish the raw material from which food-stuffs and manufactured articles essential to the maintenance of civilized existence are produced. Since the valuable land areas on the globe are geographically limited, competition among nations for terrestrial possessions and concessions is rapidly approaching an acute stage. This situation precipitates issues new in the history of mankind.

Only comparatively recently, boundless tracts of fertile soil, distributed here and there over the earth's surface, were to be had almost for the asking; rich deposits of valuable ore and minerals lay unclaimed and undeveloped; vast unexplored areas of virgin forest clothed the mountain-sides and lined the river-courses; water-power of inconceivable potential worth ran to waste. It seemed unthinkable that the onrush of civilization could make serious inroads on such a bounteous supply of natural resources and precipitate the problem of enabling them to meet public needs. Yet, to-day these gifts of nature are viewed with jealous eyes by over-populated countries. Nations vie with one another for possession of the scanty remnant of undeveloped territory in which to colonize their surplus population, and from which to replenish their waning supply of the necessaries of life on a scale commensurate with the requirements of modern living.

Industrial competition among nations is keen. The control of markets for exports is a matter of acute rivalry. Tariff and trade barriers are raised to prevent the encroachment of foreign products on the home market. Immigration laws are passed to restrict the supply of labor. Such is the tense situation that keeps the war-menace before the eyes of an apprehensive world. Powder and matches in too close proximity constitute a danger zone. The utmost forbearance and tact among the exponents of high-minded statecraft and diplomacy are necessary to prevent zealous partizans and designing schemers from hurling the firebrand of indiscretion into this explosive mixture.

Aided by the arts and sciences, material aspects of civilization have developed apace and outstripped the ethical sense of mankind. Nothing short of a great moral awakening can insure the stability of the present order. Peace pacts, limitation of armaments, commercial treaties, and the like, are all to the good. They serve to ward off danger at critical points and in crucial situations. They relieve the strain on occasions, but they do not remove the cause of the difficulty. Is the moral sense among the nations deep enough to lead men to sacrifice material advantage in the interest of peace and good-will? If not, how shall political maneuvering and diplomatic parleying prevent restive human ambition from breaking loose in violence and destruction, as has been the case in the past?

In this transitional epoch, marriage is fast losing its status as a stable institution, and is coming more and more to be treated as a convenience or a psychological romance. So long as it is contracted on the basis of sensual or social considerations rather than on that of spiritual affinity, it must continue to rest on a slippery foundation. Attempts to deal with the question arbitrarily, by divorce regulations, are apt to be meddlesome and largely futile. Amid changing social conditions of the present period, marriage, as an essentially civil or ecclesiastical rite, is not cemented by the strongest of ties. The underlying problem touches spiritual considerations and cannot be solved by invoking merely technical obligations.

Spirituality cannot be grafted on to materiality. That which does not begin spiritually does not end spiritually. Herein lies the radical distinction between the philosophy of Jesus and the attitude of the world at large. Exaltation of animal propensities, and their exploitation in the drama, literature, and art, feed the springs of licentiousness and scatter seeds that weaken the stability of civilization. In proportion as the problem of sex is divested of its sensual glamour through spiritual understanding of the nature of being, will the outlines of the ideal civilization, "the kingdom of heaven" among men, begin to appear. Ascetic vows will not solve the problem. Unless the ideal of Platonic friendship springs from a consistent source in spiritual understanding, its exalted conception has little chance of surviving amidst material arguments.

As we have hinted before, civilizations developed on an essentially material basis are subject to conditions that obtain in other departments of the natural realm — they are born, grow to maturity, decline, and pass out. Unless they cause human institutions to change from a material to a spiritual basis, idealizing, spiritualizing agencies cannot ward off the consequences that inevitably overtake all materially constituted bodies. Mankind cannot be saved *through* materiality; it must be saved *from* it. Thought must be dematerialized in order that the spirituality of Man may be demonstrated.

Nature and economic conditions are at variance. On one hand, the sexual urge, inherited from an animal ancestry, incites mortals to propagate recklessly without regard for humane requirements; while on the other hand, social and industrial exigencies tend ruthlessly to curtail opportunity and snuff out the spark of a truer existence for multitudes born of inconsiderate parents. In too many cases, children are thrust into a sphere in which they must contend, against unequal odds, with cruel conditions within and without. Only as the spiritual factor gains the ascendency does "the mind of the flesh" fade into the background.

The dominant motive of civilization would put religion under bonds to materiality. The organizing instinct seeks to apply the methods of the commercial world to the exploitation of spiritual ideas. Thus, in so far as it becomes the vehicle of ecclesiastical authority, the church takes its place along with the civil order of society as a development in the natural world, subject to forces and contingencies that determine the course and outcome of all things within the material realm. Hard and fast organization, regardless of particular creeds and professions, tends to usurp the place of the spiritual idea. However mild its sway at the start, the machinery, and the processes of its operation, assume greater importance as the cause advances. In any attempted partnership between matter and spirit, the material is certain to wax and the spiritual to wane as time goes on, until the instrument assumes to control the idea. Thus religion parts with its spiritual, vital quality and becomes more and more perfunctory.

Ceremonies, observances, forms of worship, creeds, are paraphernalia that link the popular idea of religion with a material order. Leaning as it does towards materiality, the human mind seeks these substitutes for genuine religion (which is expressed in the demonstration of spiritual truth, as taught and practised by Jesus). Material sense selects its favorite brand of religion, done up in packages and labelled with this or that "ism" or "ology", as best suits its taste. True religion is a state of mind. Men gravitate towards a given form of worship because their associations, educated tendencies, or habits of thought and feeling incline in that direction. A material cast of mind craves material symbols and attractions to satisfy its devotional instincts. When civil and ecclesiastical bodies operate on a like basis of materiality, the common quality of their standards and essential aims (regardless of nominal distinctions) logically tends to invite, at first, cooperation between their activities, and eventually, amalgamation of the bodies themselves.

The material cast of our present state of civilization is exemplified by the multiplication of obtrusive displays that challenge the ideal of order and decency. The hand of a ruthless commercialism causes the country-side and city avenues alike to be disfigured by bill-boards and advertising devices exploiting all manner of brands of salable articles. Pollution of water-courses, desecration of natural scenery, squandering of physical resources, and the reckless scramble to satisfy material cravings and whims at any cost, are an unmistakable commentary on the status of a civilization. Artificially created real estate booms based on inflated valuations, manipulation of the stock-market, get-rich-quick schemes, and a thousand other abnormal practices, tell a tale of mammon-worship on a vast scale. Nothing is sacred to the sordid ambitions of the money-god.

The moribund civilization of Rome in its later period succumbed before the onrush of sturdier races unspoiled by the enervating ravages of over-refinement and luxury. Although there may be no Goths or Huns to overwhelm our latter-day civilization from without, its moral fiber already exhibits signs of weakening. The spirit of integrity, the purpose not only to do right, but to be right because it *is* right, regardless of any other consideration, is the vital, organic force which holds society together, and without which the most flourishing institutions are doomed to decay and disintegrate. Whatever the immediate occasion for the downfall of a great people, the procuring cause of its undoing is, in the last analysis, a deficiency of the ethical quality.

It were well, at times, to pause in the midst of the drive and bustle of the materializing processes that dominate the situation to-day, and hark back to the early days of the American republic; to think on the high ideals that actuated the founders of the nation. How foreign to the standards of the devoted, even though somewhat austere, narrow-minded patriots of that period is the state of affairs at present! How far has the public conscience wandered from the exalted conception of the earlier days! Would not the wholesale corruption, graft, lawlessness, laxity of motives abroad on every hand wither before such a spirit of integrity, self-sacrifice, intolerance of misdoing, as that which leavened the thought of the founders and saviors of the republic?

What a commentary on the lapse of ideals and standards is the present compromising, indifferent, irresponsible public attitude which not only tolerates, but frequently condones, low standards of law observance and law enforcement; which permits criminal elements to work their will in the community and flout the administration of justice, while respected citizens submit complacently to the situation and glory in the marvelous superiority of an enlightened age!

Said the Galilean Prophet: "When ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it cometh to pass. . . . Ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time?"

CHAPTER VI.

"THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN."

In the two preceding chapters we have undertaken to sketch, in a general way, the world-situation as it presents itself nearly two thousand years after the Prophet of Nazareth set forth the nature of the human problem and the manner of its solution. That something has gone amiss, should be apparent even to the dullest minds. The ringing proclamation of a universal salvation, which transformed the lives of the early believers and bade fair, as it spread abroad in the world, to accomplish the regeneration of the race, gradually lost its vital efficacy, until it came to mankind as a distant echo. Wherein does the difficulty lie? Certainly there has been no lack of religious zeal and devotion during the intervening period. Churches have multiplied and flourished, propaganda has been rife, wars have been waged under the aegis of the Christian religion, and untold numbers of martyrs have sacrificed their lives for the faith that was in them.

Is there not an allegorical meaning to the story of the disciples who, having gone back to their fishing-boats on the Sea of Tiberias after the crucifixion, toiled all night in vain until bidden by their risen Lord (whom they knew not as he stood on the shore) to "cast the net on the right side?"

For centuries Christendom has labored in much the same fashion, living in memories of the past and hopes of the future, failing to discern the presence of the living Christ and "the power of his resurrection," as Paul phrases it. Was the spiritual power and unction which held forth the prospect of world-redemption revoked by divine decree after a brief but significant period? Or, has Christianity failed to fulfill its rich promise because the net of religious endeavor was cast on the wrong — the material — side?

Truly, it would seem that the Son of man had been "sojourning in another country," according to the figure in the parable. Not that the divine presence was ever withdrawn; it was the recession of the human religious sense that was responsible for its seeming absence. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?", exclaimed Jesus. The early Christians seem to have entertained the notion that their Lord was to return to earth in person at an early date, and his appearance was to mark the end of the current order. Material sense is always attracted to the spectacular, the phenomenal. As time wore on, however, and things moved along in their wonted fashion, expectations gradually subsided and the anticipated event was postponed to some future date. So the centuries rolled by, filled with the usual round of mundane occurrences until, in more recent times, the belief in a second coming of the personal Jesus revived, and the awakening sense of Christendom began to figure out the time of the Messianic reappearing. Biblical exegetists made ingenious calculations of the date of the event, based mainly on certain figurative passages in the books of Daniel and The Revelation.

Material sense ever looks for the harbinger of a spiritual dispensation in outward signs and sensational developments. It still conceives of the kingdom of heaven as coming "with observation," as "lo, here, or lo, there," as something about to come to pass in the calendar of time. Within the past century, one sect after another has set a date for the return of Christ Jesus to earth to complete his redemptive mission for mankind, only to become convinced later that it had somehow erred in its reckoning. So indeed must it be until a more enlightened sense enables men to realize that spiritual unfoldment leads away from, not towards, earthly conditions. The Christ is eternally present; only because of mortal blindness is his presence unrecognized.

"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" was the Christly message spoken through the lips of the departing Jesus, as recorded by Matthew. How, then, are we to interpret the repeated references to a reappearing in the future? According to Paul, the Christ "shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to those that wait for him, unto salvation." The seeming implication in these words that the Master's earthly career was tainted by sin is sufficiently contrary to traditional interpretation to cast suspicion on the adequacy of the translation. Indeed, this is simply one of many instances where confusion results from the New Testament translators' uniform rendering of the

Greek word in question as *sin* when violence is done to the context by attributing a purely moral signification to the term. Now, the ordinary meaning of *hamartia* (one of the commonest words in the Greek original of the New Testament) is *error*.

Is it not clear that what the Apostle intended to convey was that the Christ, the God-idea, "the Son," would be revealed (apart from the mantle of flesh and blood, the sensuous garb in which man seems to material view to be clothed) to those prepared to recognize him as purely spiritual presence? "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." "Spiritual things are spiritually discerned." The Christ, the God-manifestation, cannot be apprehended by material sense. "The pure in heart . . . shall see God"; and the spiritually awakened sense sees and knows the Christ as a tangible, living, intimate, indwelling presence. The material form of Jesus disappeared when the fleshly sense had so far faded out of his consciousness that there was no materiality left to show forth. Having graduated from the earthly school of experience, he could not, from the nature of the case, again come under bonds to a phase of expression perceptible to material sense.

The sensational picture which popular thought has drawn of a spectacular climax to earthly affairs, and the reappearance of the human Jesus, is largely derived from a forced interpretation of the Master's glowing metaphorical description of conditions and developments in mortal experience, recorded in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew. This vivid word-picture was prompted by an episode which occurred as he was departing from the temple on the eve of the crucifixion. The disciples, imbued with a sense of wonderment and pride at the grandeur of the material structure, sought to elicit a response from their Lord in the same vein. To material sense, this magnificent edifice, dedicated to the worship of the God of Israel, was a token of national greatness and a guaranty of divine protection for a people whose trust was in the Lord. The atmosphere of stability which pervaded the institution augured well for the future of a race whose traditions were inherited from Moses and the prophets.

What was the disciples' amazement, therefore, when the Master proceeded to shatter their dream of the future! "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." How like a thunderbolt those ominous words must have descended on their unprepared minds! With one fell blow he had wrecked their fondest hopes of a worldly kingdom surpassing in splendor even that of king David, a reign of righteousness in which the long-deferred expectations of a God-fearing people should reach fulfillment. Recovering from the first shock of their astonishment, they came to him privately, as he sat on the mount of Olives in the quiet of eventide, and sought an explanation of his foreboding words. "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" Evidently they recognized a logical connection between the judgment of that perverse generation by the standard of truth which he had set, and the impending national catastrophe which he forecast.

In the passage just quoted, theological exigency has forced an unnatural rendering of the original, which might more appropriately be translated: *What shall be the token of thy presence, and of the consummation of the age* (*the completion of the epoch*)*?* Jesus' reply was made after his usual manner, circling as it did around the central theme rather than dealing pointblank with a specific material event. He approached the issue in the light of its metaphysical background, and pointed out conditions in the human mind which, at any period and in any setting, must lead to certain inevitable consequences. He sought to convey a lesson and inculcate a moral that would be applicable in any contingency where the issue between spiritual truth and the aggravated claims of material sense was definitely joined on a major scale. From this broad, general standpoint, he brought his understanding to bear more specifically on the particular situation that confronted the Jewish nation at that period.

The question whether the world is growing better or worse has been agitated from time to time with varying conclusions. On the basis of ordinary observation, the problem is baffling. The essential characteristics of the human mind on the whole are not changing materially; but the mechanical accessories that have produced a new type of civilization in these latter days afford opportunity for the exploitation of evil propensities on a greatly magnified scale. From the material standpoint, life is supposed to be molded and modified by environing conditions. Man is regarded as a creature with a material body, but super-endowed with a spiritual nature. After passing through the physical stage, he is believed to emerge eventually on the spiritual plane. This interpretation supports the theory of social evolution as a means to an end in the perfection of the race. In this scheme, Christianity is looked upon as an accessory for furthering the divine plan, a contributory factor cooperating with agencies and institutions developed in the regular course of material progression. Consequently, the religious sense of Christendom looks forward expectantly to the day when these agencies shall reach a degree of perfection that will insure peace and harmony among men.

Christians in general are directing their efforts towards establishing society on a permanent foundation along this line. It is characteristic of mortals to see their ideals projected in the future, rather than to expect the realization of good in the present. It has always been a common belief among idealists that a model state of society was in process of evolving on the earth; that a race purged of selfishness, disharmony, and all unworthy traits, would eventually inhabit the globe; that men of a super-type would inherit the fruits of age-long striving on the part of less favored creatures and dwell together in brotherly love in a golden age of human blessedness. Even, however, were these material conditions capable of being fulfilled, the essential issue would still remain unsettled.

In the final analysis, there are two possible ways of looking at the world. Either the material order, to which mortal man seems to be tributary, exists as part of a divine plan; or else this show of things is a perverted image of the real, a phenomenon projected from an erratic point of view. If the material show is divinely ordained and upheld, the goal of living must logically be sought by cooperating with material agencies in promoting the evolutionary process. If, on the other hand, materiality is a misconceived impression of spiritual reality, if it does not exist in the divine consciousness or in its reflection (spiritual Man), human efforts to attain the goal by following material clues are destined to miscarry and end in disaster. Such was the gist of Jesus' teaching on the subject, enforced by his practical demonstrations of the truth.

He entertained radically different views of the human problem from those which later came to be generally accepted by Christians of all shades of belief. He rejected the supposition that society could be brought to an ideal state by working on material-spiritual lines. He treated an earthly millennium, or Utopia (which in one form or another Christians have made the goal of human striving) as a mirage. He acknowledged no partnership with forces and factors which material sense claims are operating to create an earthly paradise. He saw no regenerate social order rising out of material conditions. The kingdom of heaven, he averred, was wholly independent of material evolutionary considerations. He taught that matter and Spirit were irreconcilable, antagonistic to one another, mutually self-exclusive. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

Was his attitude towards the problem right, or was it wrong? If wrong, has not Christendom erred in exalting his name? If right, must not the logic of events sooner or later bring Christians to face the issue from his standpoint? The Son of man comes (or, rather, his ever-presence is recognized) in the revelation of that standpoint and the practical question it presents. Consciousness of the truth gained in this way is something that cannot be conferred by outward offices or performances; it depends on the individual's response to spiritual appeal. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."

A radical program on a spiritual basis is the only sufficient means of salvation from error of every description. Weeds are most effectually eradicated from a lawn by sowing clover to work them out. Reform efforts at best only clear the ground of the present crop of weeds and leave it free to produce a fresh crop.

The main point of difference between Jesus' course and that of social reformers of the usual type was his method of working *from* the spiritual point of view instead of trying to work *towards* it, as they were constrained to do. He did not antagonize reform movements, for he knew that material beliefs must fulfill conditions on their own plane; but, regarding the problem in an opposite light and going at it in another way, he could not consistently cooperate with such agencies. In other words, his kingdom was "not of this world."

Following his lead, the early Christians, too, pursued their course independent of existing religious institutions. Spiritual means and methods do not fit in with the plans and schedules of a materially conceived, evolutionary order of society; they proceed along a different line and are headed for another goal. When the church sacrifices the spiritual point of view on which Jesus' work was predicated, and becomes an ecclesiastical body operating on the plane of utilitarian considerations, it largely loses its healing, regenerating power. So it has fared down through the centuries.

Each sect has been prone to appropriate certain features of Jesus' gospel and ignore or reject others that did not appeal to it as equally pertinent. Is it not time for those who profess to believe in the Christian religion, and who stand committed to the ideal enjoined by its founder on those who would be his followers, to face, squarely and unequivocally, the issue as he presented it in its integrity? For, his understanding of the human problem and the manner of its solution was either scientifically right, or it was wrong. His diagnosis of the case, and the remedy he prescribed, must stand or fall as a consistent whole; there was no half-way about his statement of the question.

The Nazarene was not an iconoclast. He came "not to destroy, but to fulfill." While he condemned hypocrisy in every form, he did not attack, or aim to overthrow, existing institutions. He simply injected a new point of view into the situation and left his followers to make their own adjustments on the basis of their application of that point of view. So must it be at "the coming of the Son of man" — the return to his point of view. Churches, social centers, hospitals, and other humane agencies and institutions, have their place in the current social order, and they will continue to fulfill their allotted functions as long as there are persons who require their services.

Those, however, who discern the risen Christ and seek to walk in "newness of life" will come to recognize the impracticability of trying to merge their interests and efforts with those of bodies whose standpoint and attitude towards the human problem are the reverse of their own. When the inevitable parting takes place it should be not in a spirit of hostility, but in the spirit of Abraham as he separated from Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee . . . ; for we be brethren."

Human living presents a continual succession of problems; but few people realize that living *itself* is the problem of problems, that it is just as susceptible of a correct solution, when the rules that govern it are understood and applied, as is a problem in mathematics. So, mankind goes along haphazard, or gropes its way blindly and uncertainly, experimenting, trying out one clue after another, in a vain attempt to escape from its dilemma. Most serious-minded persons instinctively feel that their lives are somehow out of adjustment with the unseen source of existence — in other words, that their relation to Deity is not altogether harmonious.

Consequently, they are haunted by the need of being "saved," of being absolved from this abnormal condition. The mission of the Christ to suffering mortals is not complete until he appears "a second time . . . . unto salvation."

The means by which men seek to achieve salvation vary according to their intellectual and moral status, mental bias, educated tendencies, habits of thinking and feeling, and other human factors. It is the generally accepted province of religion to deal with questions pertaining to the individual's relation to God, and the proper method of bringing about a right adjustment of that relation — that is, of effecting his salvation. Because an intelligent understanding of Deity was lacking, the problem of salvation has been viewed in widely different lights. Ignorant, superstitious thought has sought to propitiate a wrathful God by sacrificial rites; more refined types of mind have thought to procure salvation by various forms of worship, or through the medium of priestly offices, ceremonies, observances, and other outward agencies. The theory of a vicarious atonement, salvation by grace, has been a feature of orthodoxy; while liberal denominations have stressed the saving efficacy of character and conduct; and so on. Thus religious systems of every conceivable description have grown out of confusion of thought regarding a simple issue.

Jesus of Nazareth seems to have been the first human individual to solve the problem of being correctly and completely, and so, to point the way of salvation; and he left an example of the manner in which the problem is to be solved. He discovered the nature of God and Man, and their scientific relation to each other; and he proved the truth of his claim by practical tests. Moreover, he declared that those who would follow his lead and discover this truth for themselves must do likewise. The Christ-presence, which comes to the individual consciousness in the revelation of the truth of being, is demonstrable, to some extent, in practical experience by any one who is prepared to comply with the requisite conditions.

Electric lighting was made possible by the understanding and application of factors which had always existed potentially; but the process of turning those factors to practical account had to be demonstrated by the inventor. When once, however, the demonstration was made, the result could be duplicated by others who followed his lead. Paul declared of Christ Jesus, that he "brought life and incorruption to light."

Even aside from the question of what constitutes salvation, any type of organization that contemplates the evangelization of mankind by featuring external attractions is likely to become involved in material issues which rob it of its spiritual power. The greatest human exponent of spiritual truth succeeded in winning only a handful of followers. The influence of his life did not make itself felt through the material channels which many religionists, as well as the world at large, deem essential to the successful propagation of truth. Mass salvation, from the nature of the case, is a delusion. It is ever true with a material-minded generation that "many are called, but few chosen."

"The coming of the Son of man" brings to the individual consciousness a reversal of attitude towards the whole problem of living, the birth of a new sense, a start on a radically different line with a new incentive, a new objective, — in short, it marks a new dispensation. The revelator saw the "new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven," *not* rising upward from an earthly foundation. The traditional religious system known as Christianity has been nominally accepted by scholastic theology and incorporated in a material evolutionary scheme. Various sects and institutions bearing the name *Chrsitian* have found a place among the regular activities of civilization, on a plane with secular interests. Thus conventional religion, like vocational and recreational pursuits, fills a prescribed niche in the social structure; it is allotted its place and function by custom and education, and its stated obligations are discharged like the performance of any other duty.

The name of Deity is invoked to protect and sanctify the lives of the populace and guide and mold political, social, and economic activities in a conventional scheme of things conceived from what is at best a quasi-materialistic standpoint. The form and function of religious institutions have been adapted in the main to fit in with worldly usage as neatly as did the offices and services of Judaism in Jesus' time. Thus the scepter and leadership, held in the dispensation he inaugurated by a living, spiritual faith, passed to materially constituted and administered organizations which, from the nature of their inception and relation to general issues, are debarred from challenging the material point of view as a working-basis. Because of this involved situation, worldly exigency and popular approval too frequently influence the policy of ecclesiastical bodies and govern their methods of procedure.

Ecclesiasticism and Christianity (the ideal of living taught and practised by Christ Jesus) are, from the nature of the case, mutually antagonistic. By *ecclesiasticism*, we mean the linking of religion with forms, symbols, beliefs, ceremonies, observances, and institutions or organizations which claim peculiar power and authority as revelators or conservators of spiritual truth — in short, mediatory agencies or accessories of one sort or another which purport to stand between the individual and God, who is the source and substance of all that Man is or can be.

This direct, constant, vital relationship existent between God and Man in the divine order of being was the corner-stone of the Nazarene's gospel; and he cut the ground from under irrelevant features and instrumentalities which the human mind is ever putting forward in the name of religion. By gentle stages he weaned his followers' thought from the traditional notion that "the Father" was to be approached through specially ordained representatives or authorized bodies.

The whole tenor of his teaching dealt a blow not merely to Judiasm as a religious system, but to the existence of a priestly class of any sort. Speaking of the new dispensation heralded by his life-work, he declared: "In that day ye shall ask me nothing.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name." The spiritual significance of his mission to mankind is epitomized in Matthew's dramatic word-picture of the grand climax of the Master's career, the crucifixion, when "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom," symbolizing the doing away with every intervening medium that would deny man free and unrestricted access to the divine presence.

So inveterate, however, is the propensity of mankind to bestow its confidences and affections on such mediums, that the purity and integrity of the Christian ideal have too often been sacrificed to the demands of ecclesiasticism and conventional usage. Such has ever been, and still is, the fate of spiritually conceived movements that would restore religion to its normal place and function in human experience. History must repeat itself in successive efforts of the spiritual idea to free itself from material encumbrances until men come to recognize ecclesiasticism as the foe of true religion, an interpolation of material sense which tends to nullify spiritual demonstration and destroy the supreme purpose of the Christ-mission to a lost world. "With freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

The early Christian movement was instinct with the spirit of a fresh outlook. Converts to the faith were inspired with "newness of life." Their devotion to the spiritual ideal turned custom and convention upside down, and refashioned their lives.

Their motives and aims were charged with a spiritual unction which proved its genuineness by works of healing as well as of moral regeneration. It is related that on one occasion "when they had prayed, the place was shaken." However we may construe the graphic descriptions of physical phenomena attending certain occurrences at that period, it is evident that those witnesses to the power of spiritual truth were possessed by a unique sense that brought conviction to receptive minds.

Paul was moved to exclaim: "Yea verily, I count all things to be loss . . . that I may gain Christ . . . : that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection." He knew whereof he spoke; for, had he not experienced the coming (presence) of the Christ in most vivid fashion while journeying to Damascus? So real was that episode, that it changed his whole character and career. From that time on, Christ was his constant companion and guide. "For me to live is Christ," declared he. This idea of the Christ as an indwelling presence, illumining the lives of spiritual-minded believers, runs like a silver thread through all his writings. "Christ in you the hope of glory," is the way he phrased it in his letter to the Colossians.

The world seeks surcease from its disappointments and woes in the bastard type of joy afforded by a materially bred optimism, or the artificially created atmosphere of sensuous attractions. It shudders at the deprivations and tortures which fell to the lot of the early Christians, and looks back at those harrowing features as hardships of a pioneer period which had to be endured in order that subsequent generations might enjoy a greater measure of material satisfaction in an agreeable environment.

Those fiery trials, however, forced apostles and martyrs to rise to heights where they experienced the acme of spiritual joy, which is born of overcoming the flesh. Even in the midst of tribulation their lives were so illumined by the consciousness of eternal life that earthly misfortunes were eclipsed. Here, again, Christianity presents a paradox. Spiritual joy is won only through denying the claims of material supremacy. "In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." So declared the pioneer demonstrator of the spirituality of being. Likewise Paul: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward."

The gospel of Christianity is one of hope, courage, joy, achieved by triumphing over material arguments and obstacles. The woes depicted in the Apocalypse as the heritage of the carnal mind fade out before the radiant scene portrayed in the closing chapters.

For an indefinite period the early Christians were baptized "with the Holy Ghost and with fire" and their faith was attested by "signs following," as their Lord had said it should be. As, however, religion became more perfunctory and creeds and dogmas supplanted a living faith, the glow of live coals faded from their experience; the consciousness of the Christ as ever present was lost; an "ice-age" of crystallized doctrinal beliefs and ecclesiastical forms set in; and a grey mist settled over Christendom, relieved later, here and there, by the illumined lives of the medieval mystics. Vaguely conscious of a lost element in its functioning, modern orthodoxy resorted to periodic revival seasons as a means of quickening the smouldering embers of faith into renewed activity. The type of conversion resulting from appeal to human emotionalism, and the morbid atmosphere generated by psychological conditions attending these spasmodic efforts, too frequently encourage a sentimental order of religious experience rather than a realization of the Christ-consciousness, which holds the promise of deliverance from every form of error or untruth—in other words, a full salvation.

The expression "back to Christ" has been a familiar slogan within recent years. Have the movements conceived in this vein, however, resulted in the acceptance of Jesus' point of view as it bears on the human problem in its entirety? How far have they repudiated a materialistic working-platform and faced the issue with the spiritual, healing quality manifested in the early period?

As we have noted, the appearance of any new phenomenon, in the spiritual as in the natural world, waits on suitable environing conditions. Such was the case when the Christ-idea first came into full expression in the personal guise of the man of Nazareth; and so again must it be with regard to its manifestation at a subsequent period. On the earlier occasion, the torpid ethical sense of the people invited a reaction; and, under the stimulus of the Master's spiritual quickening, the germ of a new ideal grew into a vigorous movement. So, in the present era, world-developments have set the stage for a spiritual awakening on a wider scale. In the ever-changing order of physical conditions the same set of circumstances never recurs. Material sense cannot forecast the time and manner of truth's reappearing. "In an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh"; and in a way that worldly wisdom does not comprehend, the inevitable comes to pass.

An unprecedented wakening of intelligence, as applied to problems of physical significance, has prepared the way by freeing mortals from bonds of tradition and convention that prevented the recognition of new modes and aspects of revelation. Perhaps no word more fittingly characterizes this age than *ingenuity*. Many ancient races were abundantly resourceful in certain directions, but they suffered a state of arrested development in that particular. For the first time in history, knowledge has broken through the solid wall of physical obstructions and begun the conquest of material modes on a general scale. The outer shell of ignorance has once for all been destroyed.

An automobile-engine cannot run properly without an efficient ignition system; a live spark is necessary to set the machinery in operation and keep it going. The spark of keen intelligence energizes present-day civilization and enables it to break away from static conditions which, in the past, restricted endeavor by arbitrary limitations. Released from this handicap, the progressive instinct faces unlimited opportunities for exploiting natural forces and experimenting with new methods. The unfolding of the genius for achievement on present lines is itself a novel phenomenon in world-annals. Not only is the new departure significant in a material way, but the instinct of freedom which it encourages renders the human mind more open to embrace spiritual truth. Things are coming to a head in human experience, individually, socially, and politically; secret tendencies and processes are being brought into the open; latent forces are disclosing new qualities and potentialities.

Human experience is entering a new stage. As the period of classical ideals in the modern world was succeeded by the romantic era, so the romantic is giving place to the modernistic. Without grasping just what is happening to it, the human mind is undergoing a major transformation. The cornerstone of its past conceptions is beginning to crumble. The premises of the expanding thought of to-day no longer rest on the terra firma of arbitrarily determined past assumptions. Age-long forms and modes are passing. The emancipated sense, loosed from former restraints and essaying to rise above the earth-level, is swept along by unknown currents in the mental and moral atmosphere without comprehending the nature of the power that sustains its erratic flights.

Having cut loose from the traditional notion of obligation which, like the force of gravitation in the physical realm, held it to the plane of fixed concepts, it proclaims its independence of constituted authority. The chaos and confusion which attend human struggling and striving under these conditions is, however, already emphasizing the need of a mental rudder and compass to direct and stabilize the course of affairs. Mortals have always been constrained to reach out into the unseen for help in times of distress. So to-day, the force of circumstances is preparing yearning hearts to grasp the spiritual fact of a sustaining, directing power, or Principle, on which they may rely with absolute certainty for support and guidance in every need.

We may recognize an analogy in the course of aeronautical development. The ambition to rise above the earth resulted in the construction of aircraft capable of moving about freely in the upper regions; but not until the discovery of a stabilizing principle whose control could be depended upon to overrule mechanical deficiencies and human miscalculations was a basis of comparative safety reached. Receptive minds welcome a spiritual understanding of the supreme source of wisdom and authority "with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning," as the only basis on which the harmony of Man can be demonstrated. As former conceptions of the force which sustains the planets and guides them in their courses were revolutionized by the modern understanding of astronomy and physics, so is the understanding of Man's true freedom under God's government coming to be recognized and demonstrated as a scientific fact.

All indications point to the development of a decisive issue in the approaching harvest-time of human motives and ideals, as foreseen by Christ Jesus. The true and the false, the spiritual and the material, the temporal and the eternal factors of experience are becoming more definitely contrasted. The inevitable result of this process, projected into the arena of social affairs, must appear as a crisis affecting the civilized world. The metaphysical meaning of "wars and rumors of wars" is beginning to appear in the conflicting claims of the true and the erroneous in human experience.

A flash-light in a dingy garret brings the denizens of darkness from their lurking-places and sets them scurrying about in confusion. Spiritual truth, declared and demonstrated, stirs material falsity to a show of resistance, until its fraudulent character is exposed. A bolt of lightning in the night makes the darkness seem all the deeper. What more vivid contrasts were ever drawn in a picture than those portrayed by Jesus in his definition of the issue towards which events in the civilization of his time were rapidly converging! In the course of that description, he launched forth and depicted with prophetic insight a like issue on a more extended scale when the same factors, projected on a world-wide screen, should reach the critical stage of their development. "As the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man."

How different was the outcome of his career from that which human sense might have been led to expect from the prospect that greeted him at the outset! A Jew of the Jews, he had labored incessantly to waken his own race to conditions, issues, and problems that confronted them and menaced their national existence. But that material generation hardened its heart and sealed its doom by rejecting the message of healing and salvation which he brought. The perfunctory type of morality that characterized their lives was like dry rot in the body politic. The thin veneer of traditional piety displayed in their outward conduct covered a condition of hollowness and insincerity, like the fair exterior of a piece of timber eaten out by white ants. The salt of society, its saving moral quality, had "lost its savour." Their effete civilization was ripe for destruction; ravaging forces had already made their way to the core of the system. Under those circumstances there could be but one outcome.

The prophet of Nazareth read those signs and sketched what he saw in graphic figures. In a heartfelt outpouring of mingled pity and compassion, he cited the underlying factors that contributed to the foreboding situation. "Woe unto you [alas for you], scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites [masked characters]!" Immediately following this impassioned lament, came the episode to which we have already alluded—his final farewell to the temple, which had been the scene of many of his most violent encounters with the Pharisees, who represented the personified expression of the material traits and tendencies challenged by his mission. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

So the twilight shadows fell on a people in whom a long line of inspired seers in the past had earnestly sought to inculcate more spiritual ideals. In the gathering gloom, one bright star illumined the darkness,—the star of Bethlehem, which shed its radiance over the lives of a little band of inspired disciples and enabled them to see their way out of the material gloom that encompassed them on every hand.

What, it may be asked, is the connection between "the coming of the Son of man," the revelation of the Christ-idea, and catastrophe and destruction on a grand scale? In the natural realm, that is, the picture of creation which appears from the standpoint of material sense, balance is an essential consideration. A violent thunder-storm denotes a reaction in which the disturbed balance of atmospheric forces seeks a readjustment. So in the moral realm, disturbances which ignorance and superstition attribute to "the wrath of God," or the hand of retributive justice, indicate the reaction necessary to restore a balance in the human concept of right and wrong.

Material sense, being "under the law" (to borrow Paul's phraseology) of belief, interprets such occurrences as arbitrary dispensations of a mysterious providence. Spiritually enlightened sense (which is "not under the law, but under grace") regards such phenomena as the working out of factors in the human scheme of belief. They are the recrudescence of self-destroying phases of misbelief which come to the surface ever and anon in a material concept of things in which both good and evil are regarded as of divine origin.

The fulfillment of a human ideal of justice represents the highest token that material sense can entertain of the triumph of right, of truth, over error. Moral catastrophe indicates a reaction of conditions in the human mind, a spasm of error as it is faced with spiritual truth and forced to its logical ultimatum in self-annihilation. Demonstration of the truth forces the belief of evil automatically to fulfill the measure of its asserted claims and meet its fate in obilivion. The issue between truth and error is graphically portrayed by Paul in the second chapter of Second Thessalonians. The manifestation of the Christ-idea, which betokens an inner sense of joy and peace to the spiritual-minded, brings dismay and disaster to mortal sense. The acme of good is offset, in the show-world, by aggravated symptoms of evil, violence, destruction. "Then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and bring to naught by the manifestation of his coming."

Details of expression vary with changing conditions; but the metaphysical factors which determine the fate of men and nations remain the same. Regardless of outward signs of prosperity and future grandeur, the real status of a people or a civilization is registered in the ethical and spiritual pulse of its activities. The disposition to put material success before spiritual attainment sets the danger signal. The purpose of worldly wisdom to rear a spiritual superstructure on a foundation of material prosperity carries its own death-warrant. Culture and art which are tributary to material methods and aims rest on a shaky groundwork. The health and stability of a civilization may not be rightly appraised by taking account of its charitable institutions, churches, art-galleries, libraries, schools, and other evidences of humanitarian and public-spirited instincts. Valuable and praiseworthy as such evidences may be in themselves, as potential aids to progress, "it is the spirit that quickeneth."

Without the demonstration of the spiritual nature of being in concrete works of healing and regeneration as a foundation-stone, those institutional features are like houses built on the sand, destined to crash before the fury of the storm. The most beautiful, fragrant flowers of a materialized civilization wither before the autumn frost. So absorbed are mortals in exploiting the phenomenal show of things, so riveted is their gaze on the steadily rising monument of worldly accomplishment, that they fail to notice the gathering storm-clouds.

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats." Interpreting this vivid metaphorical description in literal, matter-of-fact fashion, orthodox theologians of the old school forecast a final day of judgment, when the earth was to be destroyed and good and bad people were to be consigned to their respective future abodes. The world is, indeed, being judged constantly in a thousand ways, as the standard of Truth is brought to bear on its motives and pursuits. When, however, tendencies inherent in the human mind have developed to a certain point on broad, general lines, they come to a climax and a day of reckoning ensues.

Such a crisis occurred when the spiritual idea exemplified in the prophet of Nazareth encountered the hopelessly materialized thought of that period. "For judgment came I into this world, that they which see not may see; and that they which see may become blind." "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out," declared he. His exposure of its hypocrisy aroused the hostility of an "evil and adulterous generation" and led it to hasten its doom by rejecting his message of salvation.

He realized that the time was not ripe for a decisive issue on a grand scale; that his earthly mission at that time was but a preliminary step in a process which would eventually come to a head in a world-crisis. The good seed (spiritual ideas) which he sowed had to mature along with the tares of misbelief, in a cycle of expanding mortal concepts, before the good and evil elements in experience would be ready for harvesting.

In the illuminating parables in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew he set forth certain aspects of the situation and warned an incredulous world of the inevitable climax towards which events must tend. The general characteristics exhibited by the human mind to-day are much the same as in his time; good and evil tendencies develop along similar lines and lead to like results. Hence the force of his observations concerning the fate of his own generation, as applied to later developments in the major cycle now drawing to a close. Will his warning words fall on heedless ears, as in the former instance?

"As it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married and were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. . . . After the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed."

Amidst the ebb and flow of phenomena in the material realm, the only durable factor is the spiritual. The individual whose life is consciously linked with Principle, and whose course is verified by demonstration of the truth, is entrenched in a stronghold that cannot be shaken amidst the debacle of material hopes. "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock."

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